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Make a million from online trading

HAVE LAPTOP WILL TRAVEL
We cross the globe – without luggage

APE ESCAPE
Mail Monkey takes the Webcam Challenge

THE MP3 DJ
Vinyl? Who needs it?

BRITAIN'S BIGGEST-SELLING INTERNET MAGAZINE!

KATE HUMBLE
THE WOMAN WHO KICKED CLARKSON INTO CHAT

CAR BUYING p50

02
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stepbystep 20 pages of sensible Internet advice

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thenet

Flick before you click

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ISSN 1466-3619

COVER PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID VENNI; STYLIST: JUICE

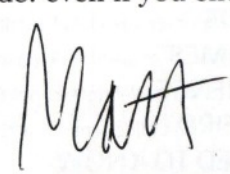
'There's as much share info for us as there is for City boys'

Nothing appeals more to our underlying sense of greed than the idea of getting rich quickly. However, whether it's playing the National Lottery, plunking the house keys down on 'lucky 14' or joining a pyramid selling scheme, the most likely outcome will be the sound of hollow, mocking laughter from some hideously-shirted croupier ringing in your ears.

But read our feature on buying and selling shares this month (p42), apply its wise words, and you'll have a genuine chance of making some real money – while enjoying yourself at the same time. There's now almost as much information available to the casual Internet investor than there is to the sharpest City boy; use it to set yourself up with a good portfolio and you could carve yourself a slice of the world's booming stock markets.

Of course, once you've made a pile you'll be wanting to spend it – or at least some of it – and you may well decide to treat yourself to a new motor. Whether buying new, second-hand or importing from abroad, the Net could save you thousands of pounds. Turn to our feature on page 50 for the details.

And look on the bright side: even if you end up investing in the South Sea Company instead of the next Microsoft, at least you'll know where to flog your car.



Matthew Bingham, **Editor**
matthew.bingham@haynet.com

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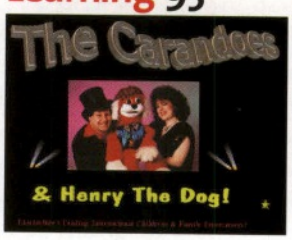

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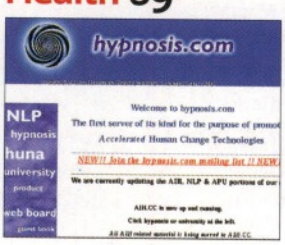

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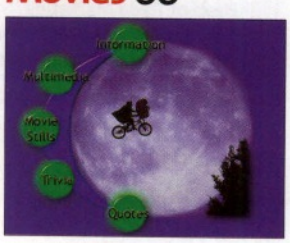

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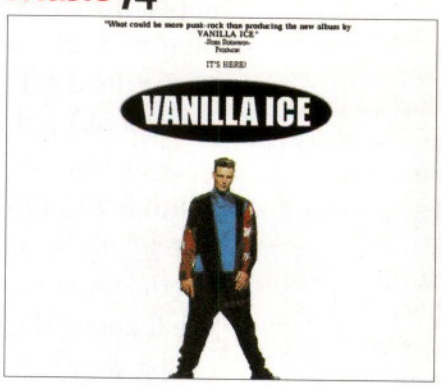

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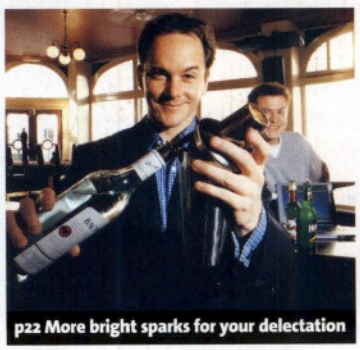
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PC LOVERS

It's a love-hate thing

Do you feel a strange affinity with your computer?

Computer dating takes on a whole new meaning in Sweden, where 20% of users stroke their PCs. The French like to hug a PC and over half of Spanish PC owners express "adoration" for theirs. These are just some of the ways Europeans interact with their computers, according to a survey by Microsoft.

The Spanish obviously have a love-hate relationship with their PCs. They may adore their machines but 57% admit to hitting them and 18% confess that computers can drive them to tears of frustration. They should try watching England play football. Talking of which, the French proved they are undeserving of being World Champions with a staggering 90% admitting they would rather be on their computer than watching the beautiful game.

Not that we have anything to be proud of, as a quarter of us Brits use our computers as an excuse to not have sex. At least it's more original than having a headache. And the French, Germans and Spanish regard us as the most computer-literate nation in Europe, maybe because over half us to talk to our screen.

But what of the Germans? Apparently only one in six Germans has enjoyed a laugh with their PC. We're not clear on whether that involves taking them down the pub for a pint. And you thought they had no sense of humour.

"Did you belt my kid brother?"

At this point, George suddenly realised it wasn't actually a new nightclub

KILL 'EM ALL!

QUAKING IN YOUR BOOTS

The best online game of all time just got better. *Quake III Arena* is now on sale, and if you only try online gaming once then this is the game to do it with. *Quake* and *Quake II* had a storyline-based single-player mode that allowed for deathmatches against other users over the Net. *Quake III* is designed specifically to hone your skills in the deathmatch mode. Your various opponents are blessed with Artificial Intelligence, which is supposed to make them act more like humans. This means you can put in some practice in one-player mode before getting on the Net and kicking ass. Needless to say the gameplay and graphics are top notch as well, so get fragging.

So far the game is only available for PC, but a Macintosh version will be available soon.

www.quake3arena.com

KNOWHOW

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT...?

No.7: Digital television

Bob checks his balance

Does that mean I'll have another plastic box on top of my telly?
'Fraid so. You need a set-top box to decode the digital signals so your television will understand them. Luckily, the boffins are working to bring your DVD, video, cable and satellite receivers together into one box. And that includes the ability to have Internet access through the telly.

What do I get out of it?
High-speed Net access, movies and shows on demand, online shopping, videoconferencing and all the other great things we do on the Web. And access will be ridiculously faster than you currently get with a computer and modem.

Great. So where can I get my hands on one?
You can't, yet. You can't access the Net through the digital television boxes available now, although they do have modems installed in anticipation.

So how long do I have to wait for this technological marvel?
The Americans, as always, are leading the way. Good old Microsoft have done a deal with Cable & Wireless to integrate their Web browser technology into its receivers. We'd estimate three years before it's widely available here.

Why do I get the feeling this is going to cost me a lot?
The first digital TVs are already in the shops and cost around £800 for a basic model, or you can upgrade your existing set with a free set-top box. You may have to pay a small fee to change your aerial. Apart from that it depends on how many services you want.

While I'm waiting, where I can I find out more?
Try the jargon-busting ***www.dvb.org***, the company standardising the technology.

The hungry TV pounced on another shopper

WHAT'S HOT & WHAT'S NOT

IN & OUT

BUDGETING
www.cheapskatemonthly.com
CALENDARS
www.pirelli.com/calendar/
MILLENNIUM BABIES
www.babycenter.com
JANUARY SALES
www.barclaysquare.co.uk

THE DOME
www.dome2000.co.uk
NATIONAL ANTHEM REMIXES
www.ministryofsound.com
LIGHTWEIGHT US SPORTS
www.nfl.com
ENGLAND'S CRICKET TEAM
www.lords.org

...and your clicks for free

PAID TO SURF

MONEY FOR NOWT

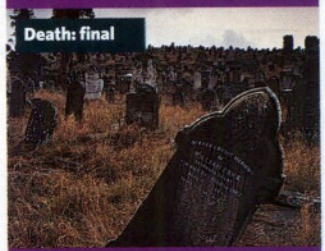
The cost of being online continues to drop, and now AllAdvantage.com is offering to pay people for using the Net. You can register to earn money by visiting the Web site and downloading the Viewbar communications window. This opens at the same time as your Web browser and records how long you have been online, as well as displaying information from AllAdvantage.com along with sponsor and advertising messages. Users are paid 31p an hour for surfing, and if they recommend someone else to the service they also get paid for every hour the referral spends online.
www.alladvantage.com

News Bytes

BITS IN BRIEF

DRINKING AHEAD

Beer drinkers made their preparations for possible millennium bug problems by stocking up before the new year. According to research by beer.com, three-quarters of drinkers hoarded beer in case of problems. Some even set up a 'beer bartering' system in case the Y2K bug brought the monetary system to its knees. Now that's good thinking.
www.beer.com



Death: final

LEST WE FORGET

The Internet is becoming the natural place for obituaries and memorials, according to a new Web site. The Net Memoriam Web site is designed to complement and extend the services provided in newspapers.
www.netmemoriam.com

NO MORNING SICKNESS

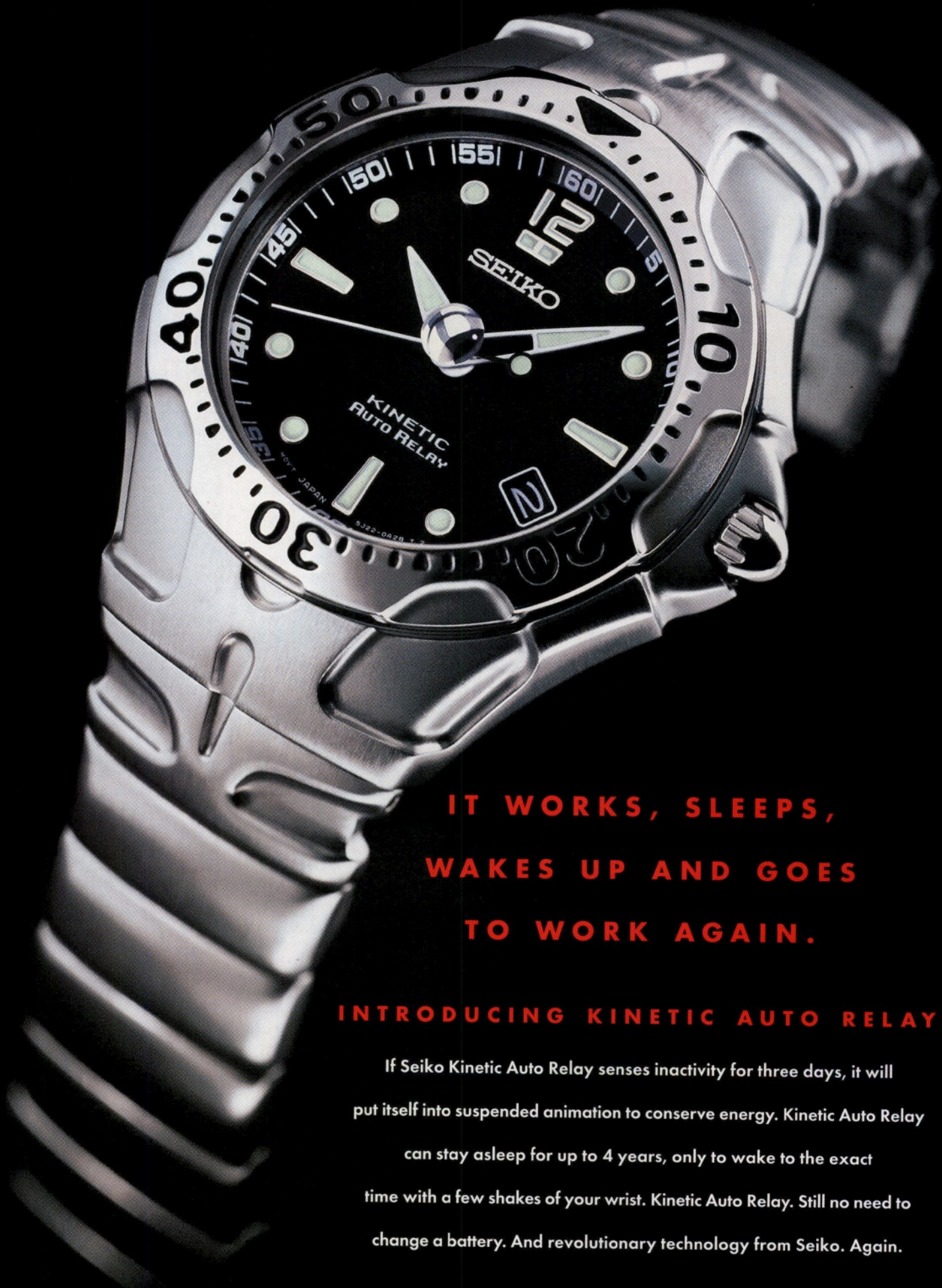
With the memory of Christmas hangovers all too recent, one Web site is promising that you need never suffer from them again. The hangover cure comes in the form of tablets taken before and during a drinking session. They reportedly negate the effects of the impurities in drinks that cause your hangover in the first place. We can't vouch for the product, but we'd like to think it's true.
www.hangoverstopper.com

VOUCH FOR YOUR POUCH

One in three British men boast by overestimating the size of their email inbox – a phenomenon dubbed the 'virtual posing pouch' by a research team at Hotmail. The survey also revealed that although men are more likely to flirt by email, only women are happy to talk about sex online.
www.hotmail.com

Size: still important

PICTURES: BBC, RETNA, REX, TCL STOCK DIRECTORY, EMPICS, ACTIVISION, KOBAL



IT WORKS, SLEEPS, WAKES UP AND GOES TO WORK AGAIN.

INTRODUCING KINETIC AUTO RELAY.

If Seiko Kinetic Auto Relay senses inactivity for three days, it will put itself into suspended animation to conserve energy. Kinetic Auto Relay can stay asleep for up to 4 years, only to wake to the exact time with a few shakes of your wrist. Kinetic Auto Relay. Still no need to change a battery. And revolutionary technology from Seiko. Again.

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AUTO RELAY™

SEIKO

www.seiko.co.uk 01628 770988

Celebrity bookmarks

No7 Leanne Battersby

'Would you like some hotpot?'

Coronation Street

www.coronationstreet.co.uk

With so much partying and drug-taking, Leanne will be hard-pressed to remember what's already happened on the *Street*, never mind her lines for future episodes. At least she can always keep up with latest events on the official site.

Kick Cocaine and Conquer

cocaine-addiction.com

She needs to kick her habit, although seeing as this place is in America it could cost her a few quid. Maybe she can find someone new to sleep with, and get him to pay for it instead.

Welcome to Canada

infocan.gc.ca

When she realises what a state she's got into, married bliss with Nicky Tilsley in Canada might, after all, seem like a reasonable alternative. Here's the place to whet her appetite.

Greater Manchester Police

www.gmp.police.uk

Another bunch of people Leanne might have to get to know in the near future. Mind you, her dad can probably introduce her to a few of the local bobbies – he's bound to have met some of them before.

The Sad Loser Schmuck Test

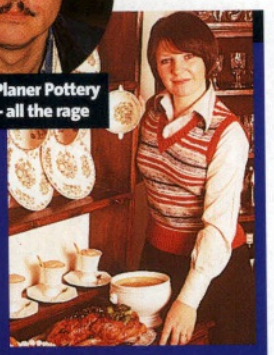
www.expage.com/page/sadtest

Just out of school, one abortion, one failed marriage, crap jobs in The Kabin and the Rovers Return, and now she's turning into a cokehead and prostitute. We reckon she might just sneak a pass here.

SPOKEN WORD

LOOK WHO'S TALKING...

Top quotes from celebrity Net chats



Planer Pottery – all the rage

'It's like going to bed with yourself and finding out you're a cracking bird. And you don't mind anything.'

Ade Edmondson on what it's like to direct and act in the same film at ***www.beeb.com.***

Edmondson: not funny

'To get into the Premiership, stay in the Premiership and play in Europe again.'

An impossible recipe for Norwich City board member Delia Smith at ***www.beeb.com.***

'Sex God Genius!'

Nigel Planer describes himself at ***www.beeb.com.***

JON CASIMIR

WORLD SURFING CHAMPION

Keeping abreast of the state of the Web

It's an old story: girl pop star has accident filming a video. Girl pop star goes into hospital for surgery on damaged knee. Girl pop star comes back a month later with enormous breasts.

I'm not the suspicious type, but was it just coincidence that, at pretty much the same time Pamela Anderson Lee removed her implants, 17-year-old Britney Spears returned from a few weeks of convalescence looking like she'd offered them a good home?

Newsweek, which always asks tough questions, went straight to one of Britney's flaks and demanded to know if the teen queen had upped her saline intake. The spokeswoman was quoted as saying that although the singer 'doesn't think there's anything wrong' with mammary enhancement, she would rather not comment on her own glands, offering the first of what has become a series of denials from the Spears entourage. Which appears to be acting on the assumption that although music video has been the basis of the popette's career, none of us actually have eyes to see with.

Now, if this were a cheesy tabloid column, we'd use Britney's reticence to discuss augmentation as an excuse to trot out all manner of seaside postcard entendre. We'd say success has swollen more than her head. We'd say she's a girl with a lot in front of her. We'd say she's keeping abreast of musical trends.

Shockwave allows you to play surgeon and inflate her bustline

But we're a decent, family magazine. So we'll just point out some other places where you can find this kind of snickering innuendo. Sites like Britney's Spheres, which contrasts five galleries of recent photos with earlier shots to show the expansion, and hosts a discussion area for those who wish to add their opinions. Its 'Theories' wing examines other possibilities: sudden growth spurts, side effects of the pill, aliens abducting Britney and implanting tracking devices without her knowledge, and so on. There's fan art – retouched photos that make our heroine look like an escapee from a Russ Meyer film – and links to the unsubtle Britney Spears Had A Boob Job and the Britney Spears Breast Pump sites; the latter features a Shockwave game that allows you to play surgeon and inflate her bustline to your own specifications.

Juvenile though they may be, these sites and services are examples of the Net's tendency to support dissent and subversion, to question what is thrown at us by today's entertainment-industrial complex. You can bet there's nothing about implants at the official ***www.britney.com***

PICTURES: GRANADA TELEVISION, RETNA

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SITE WATCH

NEW AND APPROVED

A quick round-up of the best new sites on the Web

TUBEHELL

www.tubehell.com

Anyone who has ever been squeezed on to a tube train in the midst of a seething mass of bodies on a baking hot day will appreciate this site. It's a place to talk and relax and generally slag off what a horrible day you had on the tube. Remember the mantra, 'I am not a sardine. No, by God, I am a human being'.

PHONE BILLS

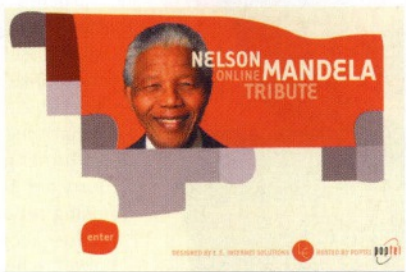
www.phonebills.org.uk

An independent guide to finding a cheaper phone bill. Tell them where you live, how often you use your phone and for what kind of calls, and they'll tell you which telecommunications company you should be with to get the best deal.

DIY FIX IT

www.diyfixit.co.uk

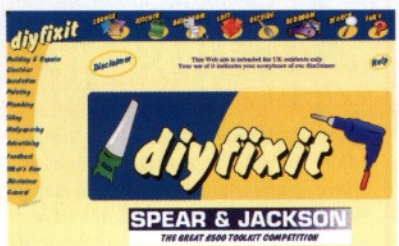
If, for some bizarre reason, the new millennium has put you in the mood to do some home improvements, this should be your first port of call. There's all manner of advice on DIY jobs, so, fingers crossed, you'll be able to keep the house in one piece.



THINK NATURAL

www.thinknatural.com

After a Yule of excess and filling your body with all manner of things that are no good for you, it might be time to think about a less toxic lifestyle. And where better to start than this Natural Health Web site offering features and advice on a healthier way of life?



NELSON MANDELA ONLINE TRIBUTE

www.mandela-tribute.com

If there's anyone worth paying tribute to as we enter the new year, then Mandela is worthy of the honour. Read extracts from his *Long Walk to Freedom* book and download the tribute song from Joan Armatrading. And if you really feel moved, you can even send a message to the man.

VOYEURISM

WEBCAMS OF THE MONTH

WALFORD CAM

www.bbc.co.uk/eastenders/walfordcam

Fancy grabbing a sneak preview of what's going on in Albert Square? Have a quick look at the Webcams on the *EastEnders* Web site and you might get some juicy gossip. There's a camera set up in the square itself, down by the market and on George Street, which is where everybody departs Walford. More exciting than a conversation with Dot Cotton – just.

Webcam excitement never stops

THE AMAZING WALLCAM

www.compassnet.com/~rdeneefe/wallcam.htm

Nothing but a wall of a house...and not a very exciting wall at that. We ought to warn you that this is 'not recommended for those with heart problems, back problems, hygiene problems, problems with inlaws, or the humour impaired'. Nothing much changes here, but then have you ever seen a Webcam that does? At least they're honest about it.

Net Charts 5

THE WEB'S FAVOURITES

BOOKS

1 **Helen Fielding**
Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason
2 **Delia Smith**
Delia's How to Cook Book 2
3 **Bruce Bernard (Editor)**
Century: One Hundred Years of Human Progress, Regression, Suffering and Hope 1899-1999
4 **Angus J Kennedy**
The Internet 2000: The Rough Guide
5 **Sue Townsend**
Adrian Mole: The Cappuccino Years
www.amazon.co.uk

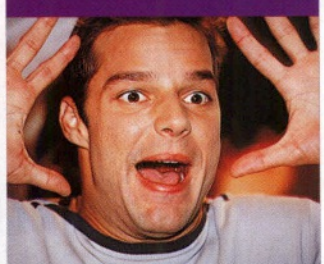
OPERATING SYSTEMS

1 Windows 98
2 Windows 95
3 Windows NT
4 Mac (PPC)
5 Unix

SINGLES OF 1999

1 **Britney Spears**
Baby One More Time
2 **Eiffel 65**
Blue (Da Ba Dee)
3 **Lou Bega**
Mambo No 5 (A Little Bit of...)
4 **ATB**
9pm (Till I Come)
5 **Ricky Martin**
Livin' La Vida Loca
www.dotmusic.com

One hit wonders thumb lifts home



Ricky Martin watches one of his videos

USES OF THE NET

1 The Web
2 Forums/Newsgroups
3 Instant Messaging
4 Audio/Visual Downloads
5 Chat rooms
www.net-value.co.uk

USED BROWSERS

1 Internet Explorer 5
2 Internet Explorer 4
3 Netscape 4
4 Netscape 3
5 Internet Explorer 3
www.proteusweb.com/browsermonitor

PICTURES: RETNA

THE BEST, THE WORST AND THE WEIRDEST STUFF ON THE WEB

HEROES & ZEROS

WORST FILM

AS BAD AS IT GETS

The worst film ever made is available for download from the Net. The plot (and we use the term loosely) of *Zombie! Vs Mardi Gras* apparently sees a deranged occultist and an evil go-go dancer raising Zombie! from the grave. He (Zombie!, not the evil go-go dancer) then runs amok during Mardi Gras, followed by a documentary film-making team, an overweight ninja and the astronomer Galileo.

The film, made with a budget of $5000, was written and directed by Karl DeMolay (who also stars in it), Will Frank and Mike Lyddon. It has attracted a variety of reviews, with critical comments such as 'the worst piece of garbage I have ever seen' and 'a crime against humanity' among the more glowing. But perhaps the best summing up of the movie comes from a reviewer on the esteemed iMDB site: 'A travesty. A sickening experience. A mess. A technically inept sack of crap.'

www.thesync.com

BEST DOWNLOAD

THE TURNER PRIZE

Plagued by the New Year blues? Then banish them forever with this glorious piece of video. Anthea Turner, the over-bubbly television presenter we love to hate, has provided the office with much mirth via this clip from early in her career as a children's show host (note the classic eighties haircut).

There's Anth, perched on the tailgate of a lorry, doing her stuff direct to camera, when a motorbike shoots out from inside the vehicle amid an explosion. What they didn't reckon on was La Turner getting blown off the lorry and that glorious coif being set on fire.

Just keep it on your hard drive and fire her up on those days when you're feeling glum.

roland.dunn.co.uk/downloads/

The highest form of flattery...

Ever since Apple realised that computers didn't have to be boring machines you could have in any colour as long as it was grey, various companies and people have ripped off the idea of its funky, brightly coloured, see-through casing. But surely there's been nothing to beat the iBrators – a range of coloured vibrators. The men behind the company have even made an Apple-esque QuickTime video in a 'tribute' to Apple and its fab products.

www.daveonline.com/cool/ibrator/ibrator2.html

STRANGEST PRODUCT

BARKER'S EGG SALE

Revenge isn't always sweet if this site is anything to go by. If you want to get your own back on someone, send them a DogDoo from DogDoo.com. There's a range of products, with the Econo-Poop at $20 and the PooPoo Grande at $30. You even get a picture of the dog earmarked to supply the bowel movement you order. There is no denying that this really is a shit idea.

www.dogdoo.com

BEST DOMAIN NAME ***llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwllllantysiliogogogoch.co.uk***. Nuff said.

BIGGEST IDIOTS

LAUGH? NEARLY

OK, mobile phones can be annoying – but that's no excuse for this bunch of idiots who seem to think it's rather jolly to dress in phone suits and steal mobiles from people. There are clips of the grabs, and they claim to have stolen the suits from the video set of the song *I Want To 1-2-1 With You*. Whether they're serious or if it's a hoax, they're a dialling tone short of a phone line.

www.phonebashing.com

Don't get mad.
Get even.
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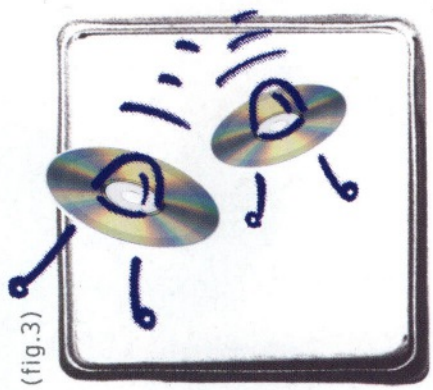
Why exactly are they man's best friend?

(fig.1-4) alternative uses for cd

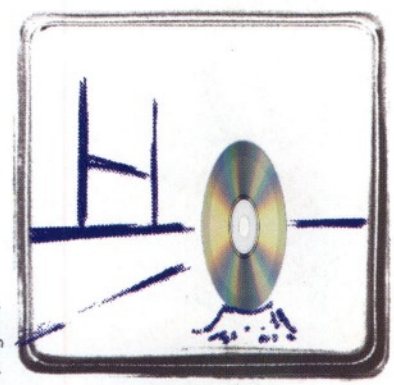
UKonline

(fig.1)

(fig.2)



(fig.3)



(fig.4)

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www.ukonline.co.uk

*providing your system has a browser

14 FRI That short Scottish guy–again

***Angela's Ashes* premiere, January 14 2000**

You can tell when a book is a phenomenon: everybody on the rush-hour train swaps it for their well-thumbed copy of *Captain Corelli's Mandolin*. That's exactly what happened with Frank McCourt's *Angela's Ashes* – so it's not surprising that the 1997 Pulitzer Prize-winning story of McCourt's childhood has been made into a film, which looks set to be as well received as the book. Starring Emily Watson and Robert Carlyle and set in gloomy 1930s Limerick, the film portrays an impoverished upbringing that sees the McCourts forced to beg for money and feasting on a sheep's head at Christmas. Apparently it isn't as depressing as it sounds – which is probably no bad thing.

www.angelasashes.com

Carlyle: wasted no effort on the dance floor

DEAR DIARY

JAN 7 FRIDAY — *Bringing Out The Dead* opens ***www.bringingoutthedead.com***

Birthday: Nicholas Cage, 36 ***www.best.com/~toni/***

8 SAT — World Professional Darts Championships, Frimley Green ***www.cyberdarts.com***

Birthday: David Bowie, 53 ***www.davidbowie.com***

9 SUN — Birthday: AJ McLean, 21 ***www.backstreetboys.com***

Birthday: Jimmy Page, 56 ***jimmypage.triton.net***

10 MON — Ramadan begins ***islam.org/ramadan/***

Birthday: **Rod Stewart**, 55 ***www.rodstewartlive.com***

11 — Birthday: Brian Moore, 41 ***www.footballfc.com***

Birthday: Jason Connery, 37 ***home.talkcity.com/ChaplinCt/chembabe1/jason.htm***

17 MON — Birthday: Paul Merton, 43 ***www.users.globalnet.co.uk/~hkev/***

Birthday: Jim Carrey, 38 ***www.geocities.com/Hollywood/7993/***

18 TUES — Birthday: Kevin Costner, 45 ***www.costnerbullpen.com***

Birthday: Jane Horrocks, 36 ***www.abfab.demon.nl***

19 WED — Birthday: **Dolly Parton**, 54 ***www.dolly.net***

Birthday: Robert Palmer, 51 ***www.jaheggarty.clara.net***

20 THURS — Monte Carlo World Rally ***www.rallysport.com***

Birthday: Buzz Aldrin, 70 ***www.astronauts.org***

21 FRI — *Stigmata* opens ***www.mgm.com/stigmata/***

Birthday: Emma Bunton, 24 ***surf.to/emmabunton***

27 THURS — Lewis Carroll was born in 1832 ***home.earthlink.net/~lfdean/carroll/***

Birthday: Bridget Fonda, 36 ***141.100.40.65/~schild/bridget/index.html***

28 FRI — *American Beauty* opens ***cinema.simplenet.com/americanbeauty/***

Birthday: Frank Skinner, 43 ***web.ukonline.co.uk/brant/***

29 SAT — Birthday: Germaine Greer, 61 ***www.feminism.net***

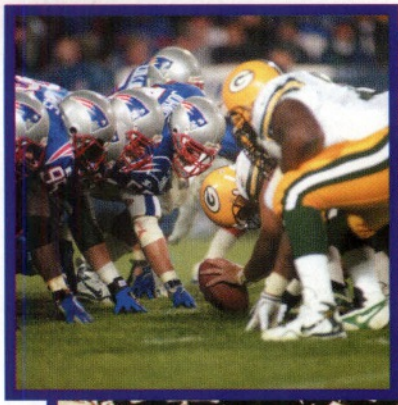
Birthday: Oprah Winfrey, 47 ***www.oprah.com***

30 SUN — The Beatles' last concert, 1969 ***user.pa.net/~strawser/***

Birthday: Vanessa Redgrave, 63 ***www.geocities.com/Hollywood/9766/redgrave.html***

31 MON — Birthday: Dexter Fletcher, 34 ***www.pressgang.yoyo.org/pressgang/***

Birthday: Minnie Driver, 29 ***doveraldo.freeservers.com***



It's the great Sir Cliff ticket giveaway!

30 SUN It ain't real football

NFL Super Bowl XXXIV, Atlanta, January 30 2000

OK, so it's not as wildly popular this side of the pond, but the Super Bowl is broadcast in 175 countries so it must be doing something right. Played annually on the last Sunday in January, this year's event will be in Atlanta. A number of teams are in with a chance of lifting the prestigious Vince Lombardy Trophy – but they probably won't include reigning champions the Denver Broncos, who have struggled since star quarterback John Elway retired. One thing's for sure: despite the event attracting 75,000 live spectators, those most looking forward to the Super Bowl must be the supermarkets – more food is purchased for the event than at any other time, including Christmas and Thanksgiving. Only in America. ***www.superbowl.com***

'I'm a little teapot...'

25 TUES Burn baby, burn

Burns Night, January 25 2000

Apparently Robbie Burns was rather partial to a wee dram and a good knees-up, so half-cut Scots celebrate his life every year in a fashion he would have approved of. A Burns Supper is as ritualistic and traditional as Christmas and involves just as much alcohol. The spectacle of a guest addressing a hunk of offal with Burns's poem *To A Haggis* is closely followed by the devouring of much fine Scottish fare, speeches, further recitations of poems, a rousing rendition of New Year favourite *Auld Lang Syne* (another Burns creation), and obligatory merry-making long into the night. The English may laugh at the Scots for their footballing prowess (or lack of it), but Burns Night beats St George's Day hands down. ***www.rabbie-burns.com***

WORDS: SARAH WAKELY/CHRIS BROCK; PICTURES: EMPICS, IMAGE BANK, RETNA

12 WED Boeing 747's maiden flight, 1970 ***www.boeing.com***

Birthday: Sid Owen, 29 ***www.bbc.co.uk/eastenders/***

13 THURS Mickey Mouse comic strip first appeared in 1930 ***www.disney.com***

Birthday: Suggs, 40 ***www.madness.co.uk***

14 FRI *The Story of Us* opens ***www.universalpictures.com/storyofus/***

Birthday: LL Cool J, 32 ***www.defjam.com/artists/llcoolj/llcoolj.html***

15 SAT *Autosport* Show begins, NEC ***www.autosportmag.com***

Birthday: Gareth Hale, 47 ***www.phill.co.uk***

16 SUN Australian Tennis Open ***www.ausopen.org***

Birthday: Kate Moss, 26 ***www.facescafe.com/kate/index.html***

22 SAT Michael Hutchence was born in 1960 ***www.inxs.com***

23 SUN Humphrey Bogart born 1899 ***www.cmgww.com/stars/bogart/bogart.html***

Birthday: Rutger Hauer, 56 ***members.theglobe.com/Annew/index.htm***

24 MON Apple unveiled its first Macintosh in 1984 ***www.apple.com***

Birthday: Vic Reeves, 41 ***members.aol.com/VicReeves/stars/***

25 TUES Whitbread Book Awards Ceremony ***www.whitbread-bookawards.co.uk***

Birthday: David Ginola, 33 ***www.paulsworld.co.uk/ginola/***

26 WED Birthday: **Paul Newman**, 75 ***www.newmansown.com***

FEB 1 TUES London Eye opens for ticket holders ***www.british-airways.com/londoneye/***

Birthday: Sherilyn Fenn, 35 ***fenn.resoft.net/default.asp***

2 WED First 45 rpm record released in 1949 ***www.fsr44.com***

Birthday: Michelle Gayle, 29 ***members.tripod.com/~MichelleGayle/***

3 THURS British Book Awards, London Hilton ***www.ukwriters.com***

Birthday: Morgan Fairchild, 50 ***homes.arealcity.com/morganfairchild/***

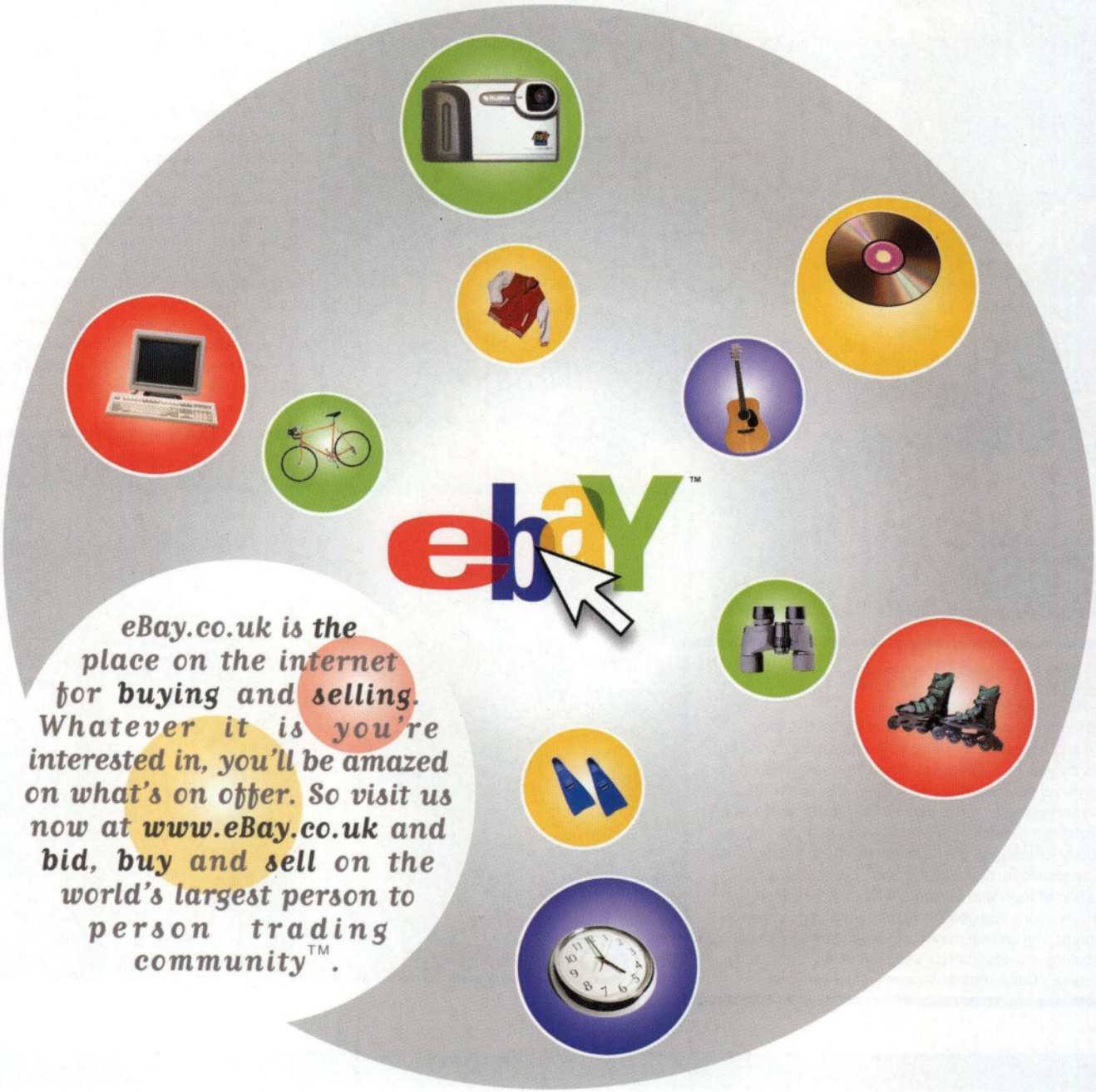
4 FRI *The Big Tease* opens ***www.thebigtease.com***

Birthday: Natalie Imbruglia, 25 ***www.natalie-imbruglia.co.uk***

5 SAT Chinese New Year ***www.chopstix.co.uk***

Birthday: Jennifer Jason Leigh, 38 ***www.jennifer-jason-leigh.com***

Get more than you bargained for!



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Dear thenet,

I read once again, with interest, of love found online (*Letters*, January issue). I hate to burst anyone's bubble, but it seems as though it's the 'in' thing to find love online these days. My husband and I also met online, though ours was a transatlantic case of love and we met nearly three years ago (when the Web was just beginning to become known) in Yahoo! chat. We weren't looking for love, just having fun online, though subsequently we did fall in love and were married. Also, we travelled many miles to be with one another (over 6000 miles between us). I lived in a small town in North-West USA and he lived here in England. We were married six months later and have now been married for almost two years. I don't want to minimise the love people have found online these days, I just want people to realise that love on the Internet is not a new thing, it is just more publicised now than it used to be.

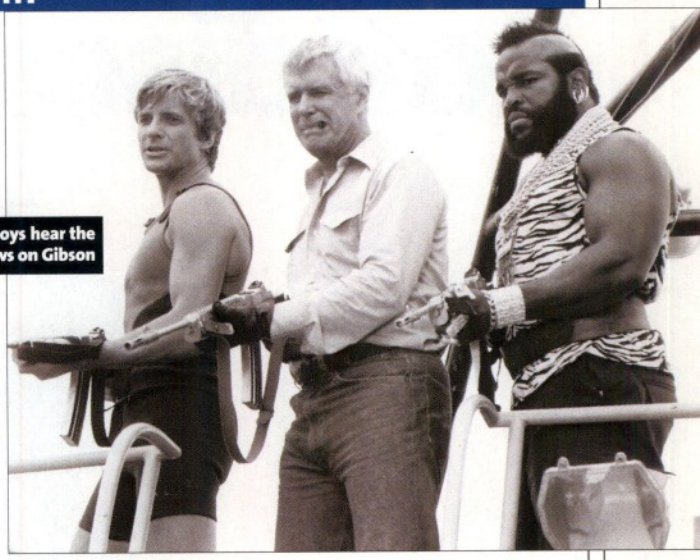
Annette Rickard
namesy/nutzie@drexeh.demon.co.uk
Did any readers find love on the Web more than three years ago? If so, please don't write in, as we're now heartily sick of the whole thing.

READER'S LETTER OF THE MONTH

Dear thenet,

Excitement and joy don't nearly match the feelings I experienced when I read in the January issue of *the net* that there was to be an A-Team movie. I didn't expect George Peppard to resume the role of Hannibal because he's dead, and rumours that Mel Gibson was to fill his shoes satisfied me that appropriate steps were being taken to replace him with an equally high-calibre performer. I was, however, angered to hear that the rest of the original cast had not even been approached to take up their original seats in the GMC G-15 van. Therefore, I felt the need to urgently log on to what was formerly known as the 'A-Team Movie Campaign Page' to vent my fury at Stephen J Cannel, at ***www.xs4all.nl/~jmm/a-team***. Justice must be done.

Lizzie Mearns
lizzie@lmearns.freeserve.co.uk



The boys hear the news on Gibson

Dear thenet,

I was wondering if there is somewhere on the Internet where I can purchase a gift voucher to be used at any online store.

They offer this service in the States, but I need to buy one for someone in England and it would just be easier to have it in pounds sterling. Can you offer any help?

Karen Coe
Coe@aiis.net
Finding one that serves any online shop is difficult but ***www.thevouchershop.co.uk*** *might give you some ideas, although the shops featured aren't necessarily online. Additionally, individual shops do their own, such* ***as www.amazon.co.uk***

Dear thenet,

I'm currently living and working in Ecuador, and I'd like to know if there's any way I can send emails to fax machines.

Colin Burchell
Colinboo@yahoo.com
If you've got Outlook Express, you can send faxes by clicking 'New Fax Message' under the Actions menu. Alternatively, you could buy a piece of software from ***www.ipost.net*** *or* ***www.visionlab.com*** *to let you dial to faxes. The best option, however, might be the free Web-based fax service from* ***www.getmessage.com***.

Dear thenet,

I have been a baker for 40 years and decided to bring my business into the modern era by creating a site to advertise my home-made bread. I had been encouraged by the PM's relentless promotion of e-commerce and thought I would take my shop into the next millennium with a site called 'Hot, Crusty Buns and Baps'. You can imagine my dismay when I got lewd, disgusting messages from people with regards to the content of my site, and so I had to abandon the venture – at the loss of several hundred pounds. The information superhighway isn't paved with gold.

James Montgomerie
jm@liveandletdie.co.uk

Bread: The staff of life

PHOTO: KOBAL, IMAGE BANK

MAIL MONKEY It'll never stand up in court

From: mailmonkey@chimp.co.uk
Sent: Thursday December 16, 1999
To: info@met-police.co.uk
Subject: A grave mistake

Dear Chief Constable,

Thank you for your official letter confirming the date of my court appearance over that unfortunate incident in central London a few weeks ago. I can't help feeling you're over-reacting to the whole thing, but I suppose I probably ought to explain myself anyway.

It all started when I was commissioned to take part in a thrilling Webcam Challenge for *the net* magazine (page 40, if you don't believe me). Off I sauntered, a spring in my step, to the bright lights of London. All was going well until, after one banana juice too many en route, I nipped into my old mate Mohammed Al Fayed's gift shop (Harrods, I think he calls it) to relieve myself. Mo and I have been mates ever since I arranged that large delivery of industrial-strength brown envelopes a while back.

Anyway, on leaving the fine establishment in question, I happened to spot Mrs Adams – known to close friends like myself as 'Posh Spice'. Now, I hadn't seen the lass for a fair few months, not since she ended our little tryst to take up with some scruffy footballer type. I was somewhat disturbed to see the popular entertainer carrying what appeared to be a particularly heavy baby, prompting suspicions that I may have left her with more than just happy memories and a somewhat troubling rash.

At the time your officers apprehended me (a tad forcefully, I might add) I was merely checking to see if the child bore the distinctive Monkey family birthmark in the shape of Gary Numan's head anywhere about him. I can't help feeling you've been swayed by the tabloids over this matter. And I fail to see what my previous convictions for 'disturbing' farmyard animals have got to do with it. I've got a crack team of top legal brains standing by, and I'm calling Lord Archer as a character witness. Frankly, I'll see you in court.

Yours respectfully,

Mail Monkey

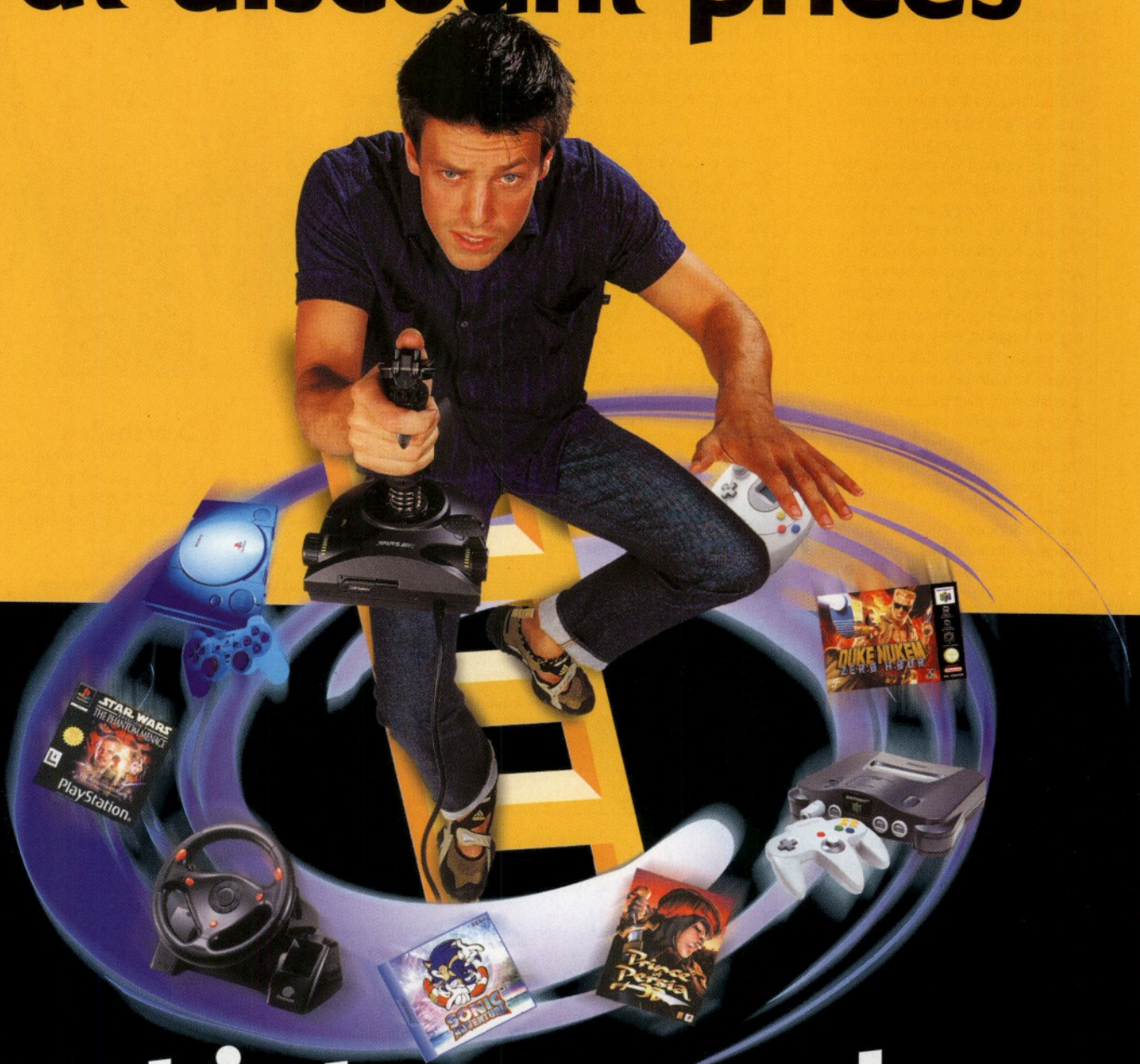
www.amsterdamstun.com

www.englandfc.com

www.gbfans.co.uk

www.euro2000.com

thousands of games at discount prices



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PICTURE: PA

Gamers: so good they play by telepathy

GAMING GURUS

No7 GAMEPLAY
www.gameplay.com

A lone, pale youth with a complexion like raw mince sits before a PC, a mountain of pizza boxes and half-drunk cans of Coke surrounding him, CDs littering the unvacuumed floor. This, surely, is the archetypal image of the computer gamer.

Colin Duffy would beg to differ. The gameplay.com CEO (managing director to you and I), who previously oversaw the development of BT's massively popular Wireplay games networking portal, has witnessed a huge change in the profile of the average gamer in recent years.

'Games players make up about 20 percent of the population now,' says Duffy. 'It simply isn't the eight- to 14-year old in his bedroom anymore. The "Internet nerd" image is no longer there: the gamer himself is much older, increasingly women are playing and it's now becoming truly mass market.

'Already the games industry is the same size as the music industry. Some people may find playing games strange, but others would think that going to bingo or spending six hours on the trot watching television was just as strange. The fact is, there is nothing that is growing as fast as games are at the moment.'

Gameplay has quickly moved on to centre stage in this cultural revolution. Born in February, the site took over Wireplay and merged its massive database of playable, networked games with an e-commerce feature, forums and reviews.

'There is nothing that is growing as fast as games are now'

What this means, in layman's terms, is that they've tied up every

GAMEPLAY

WHAT IS IT? Everything the keen online gamer could possibly want from a Web site.
LAUNCHED February 1999.
TRAFFIC Page impressions are 'in the millions' each day.
BASE 8-14 Vine Hill, London EC1, or Entertainment House, Cross Chancellor St, Leeds LS6.
KEY FEATURES Games chat, networking, professional reviews, reader-submitted reviews and shop.

facet of gaming under one roof. Not only do you get the opportunity to play the latest titles against opponents anywhere (thus racing an F1 driver from Tokyo while sat at home in Trowbridge, or pummelling a Quake expert from Macedonia from the safety of Middlewich) but you can buy the games, read the reviews and chat to fellow users about them. Throw in an extremely usable interface and you've got what Internet industry types just love to call a 'one-stop shop' for the gaming community – the only site many joystick worshippers will ever need. Oh yes, they're also a free ISP.

Gameplay have tied up every facet of gaming under one roof

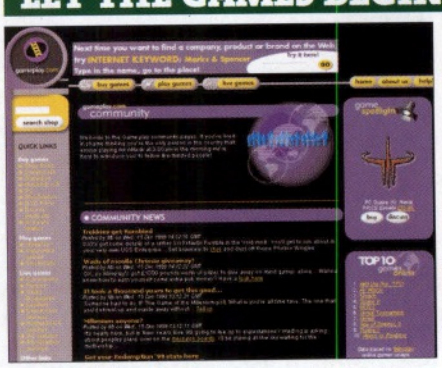
'Gameplay is unique,' says Duffy. 'Nobody else in the world is promoting games in the way we do. There was a huge gap in the market for a site like ours. It's still early days, but already you can do so many different things with each game on the site.'

Gameplay's success is irrefutable, despite the lack of hard statistics. Duffy confirms that page impressions are in the 'millions a day' range, while the site is already the UK's number one gaming destination and one of the top 20 sites in the country. And after such a successful first year, things can only get better for the gamers. Already there are plans to expand into Europe, while the ever-generous Rupert Murdoch has invested some of Sky's spare cash in a 10 percent stake.

Gameplay now has its own show on Sky's Open Web broadcast, and the possibility of network gaming through a TV set looms ever larger – but, says Duffy, 'There's just too much of a delay in the signal at the moment; it doesn't work too well on satellite right now.' The gaming behemoth is also rapidly developing content for non-games sites to incorporate. 'This field can be very difficult for non-games-specific companies to get into,' Duffy explains. 'Games sites need to have the right tone of voice, they mustn't patronise their readers.'

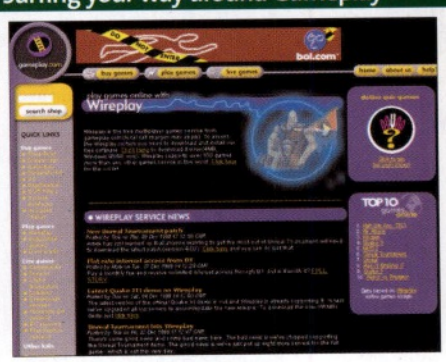
It seems the old image of the online gamer could well be rendered redundant soon. And if you do drop by Gameplay to see what all the fuss is about, you might just bump into Duffy himself. 'You'll find me in the multi-player room playing Unreal or Quake,' he confirms. Go on, slaughter a CEO today...

LET THE GAMES BEGIN! Surfing your way around Gameplay



COMMUNITY

This is where Gameplayers meet to chat about the latest titles and brag about their keypad prowess. Interaction is encouraged through the 'write reviews' option.



NETWORKING

Download the software and you're ready to play a range of titles – including the likes of Quake and Grand Theft Auto – against anyone, anywhere, many of them for free.

SHOPPING

Gameplay doesn't just sell games – it includes comprehensive reviews of each one to boot. There's also a top 10 chart, special offers and a phone number if you don't want to buy online.

WORDS: ROBERT JEFFERY; PICTURES: ALISTAIR BERG

THE FOOCHA IS NOW E-zine with attitude

FOOCHA!

www.foocha.co.uk

Graham Bower had a problem. He'd come up with the idea for an impressive-looking Web site which reviewed the latest releases and presented opinion in a manner befitting the finest journals, but he couldn't find a name for it. 'We spent weeks discussing it, trying to find a name that no one hated,' remembers Graham. 'We settled on Foocha, because it's short, easily-registered and it sounds a bit like "future"'.

A Swedish friend is very opinionated about carpets in toilets

The 'we' in question included Graham and his right-hand men Jeremy Carpenter and Justin Harries, who have helped Foocha live up to its tagline, 'The UK's most outspoken Web site'. 'We thought we could say that because it's hard to quantify and argue with,' explains Graham from his Richmond stronghold.

It's also hard to argue with the quality of the site. Easily navigated and attractively laid out, Foocha is crammed with tasty morsels. 'I work in an office and have the Web on my desktop, and I wanted to produce something for workers to read while they have their sandwiches. That's why the reviews are bite-sized.'

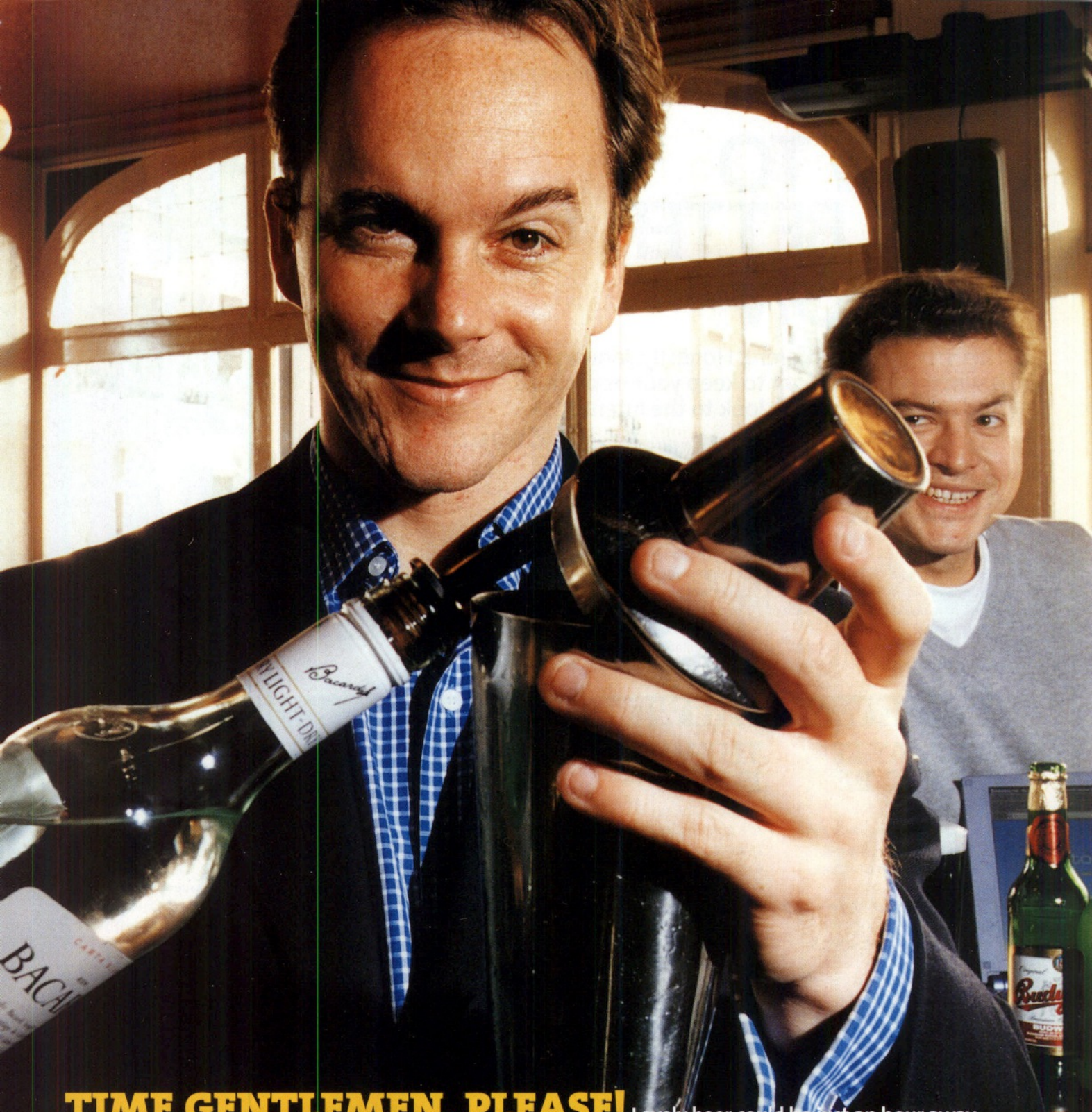
Those reviews look at movies, music, books, TV and technical kit with an unflinching honesty which marks a return to fanzine culture – or, as Graham puts it, 'a hobbyist-type venture'. 'Some of my friends were unemployed, with time on their hands, and had interesting opinions on things.' Those hard-hitting views – updated weekly – are often about new releases, but writers are also given space to vent their spleens on any topic they like in specially-tailored columns.

It helps that Graham has such opinionated friends from all over the world. A Swedish pal is very wary of carpets in toilets; a French chum loves to stir up debate in her 'Roastbeef' column; an American writer in London stands up for the stars and bars. Graham is even trying to coax a German friend into adding his two Deutschmarks' worth. And if Disgusted of Tunbridge Wells is provoked into replying, that's fine – readers' views are actively requested, and they're beginning to roll in as the hit-rate grows month on month.

So what's the future for Foocha? 'I'd like to get some advertising revenue to cover my costs,' says Graham, who's currently pouring his own money into the venture. 'But I can't imagine making money out of it – I wouldn't want the site to sell out.' Judging by the tone of the writing, it's hard to imagine that could ever be the case.

Lastorders registered a whopping one million hits in its first fortnight online

WORDS: GARY PARKINSON; PICTURES: STEVE ORINO



TIME GENTLEMEN, PLEASE! Lovely beer could be just an hour away

LASTORDERS.COM

www.lastorders.com

The addition of alcohol to the bloodstream tends to increase the creative flow of ideas. We've all sat in pubs coming up with infallible ideas for world domination... which tend to lose their brilliance next morning after a glass of Alka Seltzer.

Not long ago, James Oliver and Ian Gardiner did just that: cooked up an immediately impressive idea over a jar of lager top in an Edinburgh alehouse. The thing is, it was still a good idea the morning after – a concept stunning in its simplicity: the online off-licence.

Initially, the twosome considered selling end-of-line booze at knockdown prices, but a quick scout around showed that there was a massive untapped market for the home delivery of beer – the British spend £3 billion a year on take-home booze. Lastorders.com (the name was supplied by James's wife) had arrived.

Ian's background in the Net – he was a prime mover at respected news service NewsBase – helped him realise it was no pipe dream, so former City hotshot James set about talking to breweries, distributors and wholesalers.

A few months later, they were cracking open the bubbly. Lastorders.com was soft-launched, partly because the last thing anyone wanted would be to open for business then fail to fulfil expectations, and partly to ensure that customer service could keep on top of its game. But despite the low-key launch, word of mouth and judicious advertising – most notably a trailer on popular football site Teamtalk – helped the site clock up hundreds of orders, thousands of registered users and more than a million hits in its first fortnight.

Not that Ian and James are sitting back. This year will see lastorders.com going global, with Australia, South Africa, New Zealand and Canada all target markets. And now the site has found its feet, the publicity will be cranked up – M&C Saatchi have been brought on board to further improve the company's positioning and image.

As for how quickly you get your hands on your cans, the site started up offering next-day delivery anywhere in mainland UK. And because wholesalers are exempt from Britain's archaic licensing hours, the ideal situation – soon to be piloted in Edinburgh – is to provide round-the-clock delivery within one hour. Now that would be something worth coming home from the pub for.

HOW TO BE A BETTER PERSON

This year will be different. Honestly. January 2000 is when you finally get to keep your resolutions. And for help with that, look to the Internet

As well as being a good month for calendar sales, January is prime time for guilt-trippers to feed our insecurities as the nation's resolve is tested. Yes, scarcely has Big Ben's last bong faded into the night when the land begins to resound to the noise of breaking resolutions, as smokers say they'll give up in the morning and 'dieters' have one last celebratory slice of chocolate cake.

For many it's a token nod toward self-improvement, but others go through weeks and months of hell giving up their addictions, making themselves irascible – and therefore worse people anyway.

But this time it really is different: a new millennium, which means those late-December cries of 'this year I'll...' carry much more weight than usual. But will we *really* be able to stick to them? And will that suitably 21st-century medium, the Internet, help us in our goals in any way?

THE OLD WAY vs THE WEB WAY

THE WAY IT USED TO BE

GIVE UP SMOKING
Patches, an iron will, hypnosis, herbal cigarettes, chocolate – they may help, but probably not all at once.

LOSE WEIGHT
Avoiding fat, Polyfilla-like meal-replacement drinks; but *are* you overweight? Go on, have a biscuit.

TAKE UP EXERCISE
Like the bloke in the bran cereal ad, would-be keep-fitters get the tracksuit long before they join a gym.

BE NICE TO PEOPLE
Worthy, but all thoughts of goodwill to your fellows tend to vanish the minute you hit the M25.

LESS OF THE BOOZE
An easy one to promise after a hedonistic Christmas; less easy to do in January when there's absolutely nothing else to do but hit the sauce.

GET A NEW JOB
In the New Year it's time to start scouring the job ads for employment as a bed-tester.

FIND A HOBBY
This year, do something constructive with your spare time – like collect stamps, or clear out the loft and create a model railway.

FIND LOVE
January's a lonely month if you have an empty heart. So check the lonely hearts ads and get down to the supermarket on Singles' Nights.

THE WAY IT IS NOW

GIVE UP SMOKING
Not an easy one to do via the Net, although you could concentrate on developing other addictions. The support groups have strong online presences, but it might be more productive to lose yourself in the Web's wide spaces as you try to forget about tabs. And at least your hands will be busy.

LOSE WEIGHT
There's a wealth of dietary information on the Net, and a pile of quack schemes. If you pick the wheat from the chaff you could get some tasty morsels. You'd have to avoid snacking while surfing, though.

TAKE UP EXERCISE
Let's face it – sitting in front of a screen till all hours isn't incredibly beneficial to your health. If your idea of a workout is walking to the kettle or fridge then you're not going to be at the peak of physical fitness. And unless you have a very good streaming video system, it's just not as easy to get into the rhythm as when you're jumping up and down in front of the latest Rosemary Conley video.

The Net is far better at spreading hate than love

BE NICE TO PEOPLE
The Net is far better at spreading hate than love. Whether it's racist bigotry, religious intolerance or chatrooms whose missives never rise above the level of 'eat shit', the relative anonymity of the Net affords imbeciles the chance to mouth off far more than it aids the spread of peace, love and happiness. Try setting up a 'Be Nice To Everyone' site and see how many snide emails you get.

LESS OF THE BOOZE
Drinking and the Internet don't particularly mix; all those screens with terrible backgrounds and tiny writing will induce a headache once your vision blurs, and you'll only end up spilling tequila on the keyboard. That said, there's a worrying trend towards installing Net connections in bars.

GET A NEW JOB
Heaven on a screen for those determined to up and leave. No more furtive fumblings as you rustle the Situations Vacant page while pretending to check the sports results: you can check the online employment agencies and job opportunities and – this is the best bit – do it in your boss's time. You can even get on to employment emailing lists, unless you think the forces of evil might be snooping through your files.

FIND A HOBBY
The only problem is, where to begin. Hobbyists are by their nature enthusiastic, and a cyber-soapbox lets them spout about their treasured topic. So you could learn far more than you need to about anything from philately to pipe-bombs, and chat to other devotees while you're at it.

FIND LOVE
These days you can't read a newspaper (online or in print) without reading how an Australian fell for an American through a Net chatroom and now they're happily married with two modems and another on the way. The only problem with this method of meeting Mr or Ms Right is that they could, quite frankly, be a complete pig – and you'd only know when you stepped off the plane.

WORDS: GARY PARKINSON; ILLUSTRATION: RIAN HUGHES

FINAL THOUGHT

Just don't go thumping Nicotinell's site when it all goes horribly wrong

Okay, deep down inside you know it's only a matter of a few weeks before you reach for your first Rothmans. However, if you're really determined to improve yourself – and thus humanity – you can certainly get help from the Web; just don't go thumping the Nicotinell site when it goes wrong. Trouble is, sitting and surfing does lend itself naturally to having a cream bun, a triple espresso and a fag.

SITES TO SEE

The best of the 'denying pleasure' sites

QUIT SMOKING
www.quitsmokingsupport.com
The overbearing worthiness of this site might have you reaching for the Capstan Extra Strengths.

FAD DIETS ***www.healthwealthsolutions.com/faddiet.htm***
A grim site warning of the various fad diets. Features an advert for a '60lbs in 60 Days Wieght [sic] Loss Program! Money Back Guarntee! [sic]'

FACE EXERCISES
www.sundaypaper.com/www/shipleypress/jjtestimonials.html
How to maintain facial beauty through exercise. It's a start, even if the woman on the screen looks like Zelda from *Terrahawks*.

ALCOHOL PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS
wwwz.potsdam.edu/alcohol-info/
Encourages the odd glass. Which is definitely good news.

MONSTER ***www.monster.co.uk/***
Take control of your career, it says, with info on companies, CVs and, most importantly, up to 5,000 jobs.

EDDIESPOTTING
www.lorryspotting.com/index.htm
For those who delight in spotting Eddie Stobart wagons. Well, it brightens up motorway journeys.

CYRANO
www.nando.net/toys/cyrano.html
Help with love letters: sound, graphics, animations, but mainly a silver tongue – Cyrano's got 'em all.

You understand your products and market. We understand the Internet. Together we can create a tailored solution for all your E-mail, E-commerce and Internet needs.

With the increasing pace of change in the world of the web, it is easy to feel left out and left behind. But now the right sort of help is at hand.

At Magic Moments we have our own network and our own resources. We provide mission critical Internet services to some of the best known names in business and we can do the same for you - simply, efficiently and cost effectively. We offer the most comprehensive E-commerce, shopping cart and hosting solutions available and specialise in world-wide domain name registration.

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Email & Web Hosting Packages:

All our Email and Web Hosting packages also include: domain name registration or transfer, daily backups, Smart UPS and technical support.

ALL packages come with FREE Internet connection which benefits Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children.

Email Packages:

Magic EBasic **£40pa**
- Unlimited Email addresses
- Single Email routing

Price excludes naming authority fees

Magic EPlus **£75pa**
- Unlimited Email addresses
- 10 POP Email boxes
- Remote control panel via web interface
- Multiple Email routing

Price excludes naming authority fees

Email & Web Hosting Packages:

Magic SoHo **£130pa**
- 30 MB web/hosting space
- Unlimited Email addresses
- Single Email routing
- Full FTP access and personal CGI-BIN
- Remote control panel via web interface
- Full graphical site statistics

Price excludes naming authority fees

Magic Standard **£155pa**
- 50MB web/hosting space
- Unlimited Email addresses
- 10 POP Email boxes
- Multiple Email routing
- Full FTP access and personal CGI-BIN
- Remote control panel via web interface
- Full graphical site statistics

Price excludes naming authority fees

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- Unlimited Email addresses
- 15 POP Email boxes
- Multiple Email routing
- Unlimited Email autoresponders
- Full FTP access and personal CGI-BIN
- Remote control panel via web interface
- Full graphical site statistics

Price excludes naming authority fees

£10 from this package is contributed to charitable causes. Charities include: NSPCC, Great Ormond Street Hospital, Imperial Cancer Trust. Details: http://www.magic-moments.com/charity/

Magic Enterprise £255pa

- 100 MB web/hosting space
- Unlimited Email addresses
- 20 POP Email boxes
- Multiple Email routing
- Unlimited Email autoresponders
- SSL secure server
- Full FTP access and personal CGI-BIN
- Remote control panel via web interface
- Full graphical site statistics

Price excludes naming authority fees

E-commerce Services

E-commerce solutions (including SSL)	from £65 pa

Other Services

Additional web/hosting space (10MB)	£25 pa
Database facilities	from £200 pa
Filemaker Pro database hosting	from £200 pa

Naming Authority Fees

UK domains (.co.uk, .org.uk)	£5
Global domains (.com, .org, .net)	£45
Ireland domain (.ie)	£95

Based on two years fees. Fees are subject to change without notice due to fluctuations in exchange rates.

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'INTERNET DJ... HERE WE GO!'

After the Web, MP3 has hit the dancefloor. Meet Richard Eden, the world's first MP3 DJ

MOST CLUBGOERS CAN SPOT A DJ A mile off. Just follow the trail of discarded vinyl, the gaggle of lust-crazed young girls swarming round the decks and the unmistakable jangle of heavy gold jewellery, and you won't go far wrong.

Richard Eden, by contrast, looks more like a cloakroom attendant than a wannabe Carl Cox. Yet the computer analyst from Epsom, Surrey, can claim to be a genuine musical pioneer – he's the world's first MP3 DJ. While other jocks lumber from club to club laden with over-sized boxes of vinyl, Eden turns up armed with nothing but a laptop. He just plugs himself into the club's sound system as any other DJ would and, thanks to the proliferation of MP3 sites across the Web, has an instant array of the very latest tunes to choose from.

Eden, 26, had been a conventional vinyl MC for 10 years before discovering that his day job working with computers could also help him out with his passion. And now he's almost evangelical about his new-found profession. 'A lot of people think I'm this crazy computer geek,' he laughs, 'but I do think digital DJ-ing will be the future. All you need is the right software and a good pair of headphones.'

Eden's also hoping to encourage less experienced DJs to hook onto the Web rather than hang around obscure record shops in search of the Next Big Thing. He's planning to write some tutorials about his skills on the specialist Web site ***www.clubbed.com***, and developing a piece of software called V-Deck that's so user-friendly even your gran could get a job spinning the virtual wheels of steel...

How did you get started as an MP3 DJ?
I had always enjoyed DJ-ing with vinyl, but then I downloaded this program called Virtual Turntables that lets you mix MP3 tracks, and I just fell in love with it. When I first played clubs with my computer I'd use vinyl as well, but I'd get a really positive reaction from the crowds to the MP3 stuff.

Do you get any hassle from more conventional DJs?
Not really, although some of them get a little bit confused. I remember one time a DJ came onto the podium to take over after one of my sets, and he was just staring at the turntables, wondering where my records were. He couldn't comprehend what was going on. I played a gig once and Jeremy Healy was there. He came over to have a look but he didn't stay for long. Maybe he was scared.

What are the advantages of MP3 over vinyl?
There's no danger that the tracks will jump! Also, it's more interactive. I have this projector and big screen hooked up to the computer which displays the name of the track I'm playing. With DJs using vinyl, only the people crowded round the DJ booth can see the name of the track. And of course you can store thousands of tracks on your hard drive, whereas you can't possibly bring thousands of records with you. Imagine you're playing a gig in Singapore – you probably won't be able to find a record store with the latest white labels, but you will be able to download them using your computer. Plus, you're not restricted by what records you bring with you that night; you can download new stuff right there in the club if you have a speedy Net connection.

'Digital DJ-ing will be the future. All you need is software and good headphones'

Surely it's cheating, though – doesn't it take all the skill out of DJ-ing?
What I'm doing is at a very early stage at the moment. The technology is at the same point as it was when those vinyl DJs in the 70s would turn up with two separate hi-fis and mix inbetween them. As the technology develops and innovates, the job will become more skilful. And the fact that you don't have to worry about getting records out of their sleeves and onto the decks means you can concentrate more on the music.

How many tracks can you store on your hard drive?
Well, MP3 compresses down to about a megabyte for a minute of music, so a six Gb hard drive can hold about 100 hours of music. I usually play for around two hours, so I'm never going to run out.

Will MP3 make normal DJ-ing obsolete?
Possibly. As more kids get these kinds of programs on their PCs, they'll realise that they can do more with MP3. You'll go into clubs and the DJs will all be using PCs, and there'll be this old dusty turntable in the corner for nostalgia purposes! Turntables might still have a future, though – in Amsterdam they're developing a turntable that'll link up to MP3s, so you'll be able to 'scratch' sound-files. But the technology might render DJs obsolete as well. I've heard about one computer program that downloads tracks by using sensors on the floor, playing different tracks depending on how many people are dancing.

Find out where Richard Eden's playing next – and buy tickets for other top DJs' sets – at ***www.clubbed.com***

CLUB PORTALS

CLUBBER *www.clubber.co.uk*
E-CLUBBERS *www.e-clubbers.com*
MINISTRY OF SOUND *www.ministryofsound.co.uk*
UPFRONT *www.musiclinks.com/upfront*

VIRTUAL TURNTABLE PROGRAMS

EJAY *www.ejay.com*
FINALSCRATCH *www.n2it.net/finalscratch/*
SCRATCH IT *www.turntables.de*
VIRTUAL DEEJAY *vdj.cjb.net*

'One time a DJ came onto the podium after one of my sets,

and he was standing wondering where all my records were'

WORDS: JOHN MULLEN; PICTURES: GUY JORDAN

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FRAGIL
AIR CANADA
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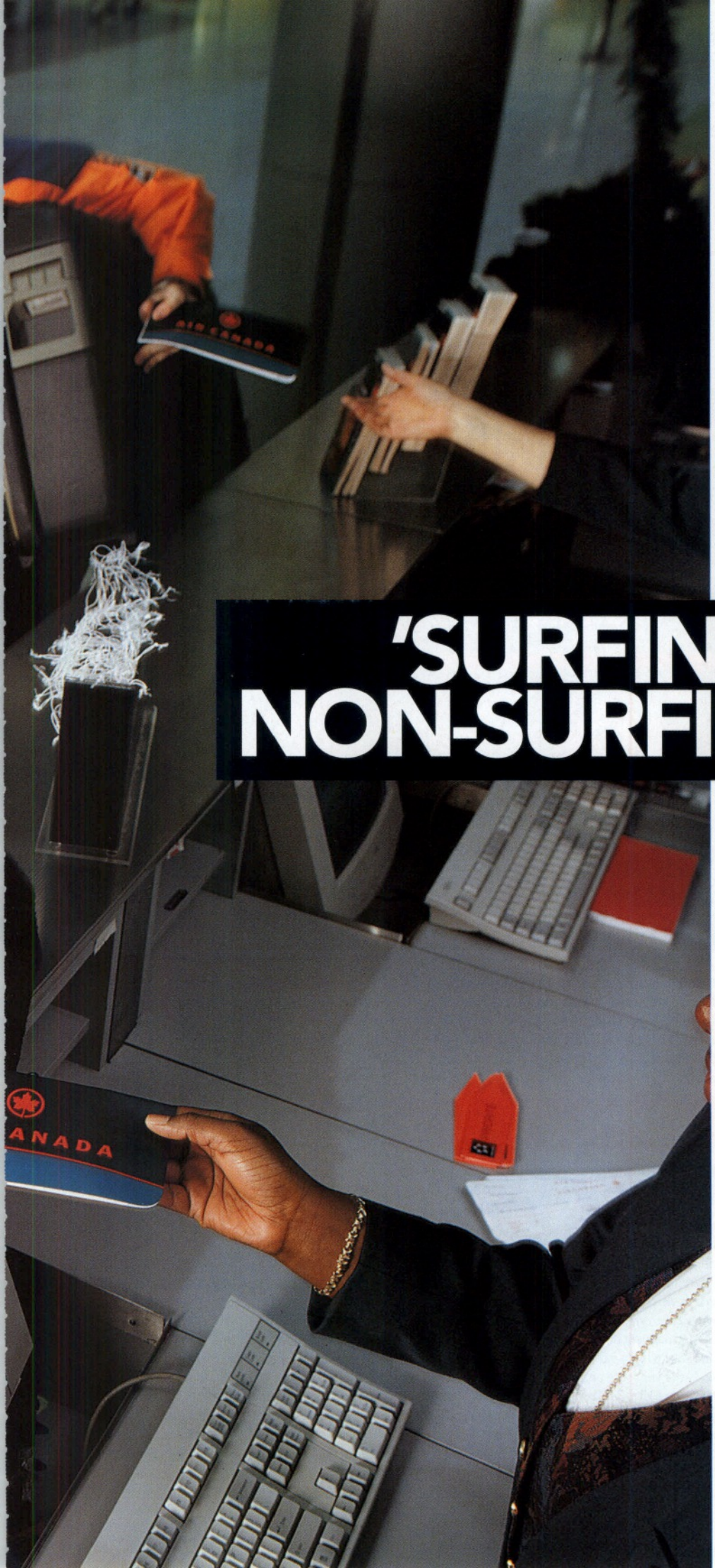


Everyone's buying flights on the Net, but how easy is it to book a complete holiday online? We accepted a challenge from the Canadian Tourism Commission to explore the snowy northern country – arranged entirely on the Internet

'SURFING OR NON-SURFING, SIR?'

THE BRIEF

To surf my way through the provinces of Quebec, British Columbia and Alberta. The trip should begin in Montreal and finish in Vancouver – or vice versa. In addition, I was expected to achieve the following:

- Take part in at least four different winter sports activities.
- Sample the city nightlife in the winter and/or Christmas shopping.
- Book/research all of the activities via the Internet.
- Book internal travel in Canada via the Internet.
- Book flights to and from Canada via the Internet.
- Investigate booking all accommodation via the Internet (either before the trip commences or whilst on the move – traditional face-to-face and telephone booking to be used only as a last resort).

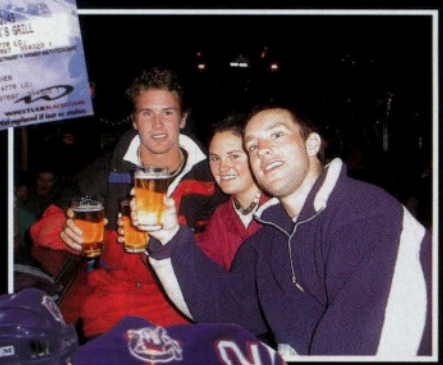
WORDS: PAUL WINSLOW; PICTURES: STEVE ORINO; THANKS TO SNOW & ROCK WWW.SNOWANDROCK.COM

WHERE DO YOU BEGIN BOOKING A holiday like that? Well, it seemed like getting into the country would be a good place to start. I decided to fly into Vancouver and set about finding a seat. Buying one-way flights can be a little bit more difficult than getting a return as some sites don't do one-way trips at all. I looked on a few sites and found a superb deal at Ebookers (***www.ebookers.com***). The flight went via Amsterdam, but for £214.60 including all airport taxes I wasn't complaining. Getting a flight back to London from Montreal proved more difficult, as there are even fewer sites offering one-way travel into this country. I was looking at a

CANADIAN SNAPSHOT

1 No one realised that Psycho was filmed in Whistler

2 If we lean towards each other we won't fall over



3 Mine's a pint

5 The secret to being a good snowboarder...

'What was a mere train ride turned out to be the real highlight of the trip'

7 Work can be a real bitch at times

8 I never knew that Tarzan had a house in Canada

price of about £500 to get home when I had one of my more enlightened moments. I searched for a return ticket and found one that was cheaper than a single – the kind of logic our rail companies would be proud of. A return flight to Montreal from Last-minute.com (***www.lastminute.com***) set me back £277.02 including taxes.

I had a way of getting into the country and a way of getting out, but how was I going to travel within Canada? To add a bit of variety I booked coach, train and plane. My first trip from Vancouver would be a return to Whistler to try my hand at some winter sports. Greyhound coaches (***www.greyhound.ca***) don't have online booking but I was able to find out fares and timetables using the Net, and the return trip cost a mere $40 (£17.40). Having returned to Vancouver, the next leg of my journey would take me by train to the province of Alberta and the city of Edmonton. I booked an overnight trip across the Rockies through VIA Rail (***www.viarail.ca***); my ticket would be ready and waiting for me.

Edmonton to Montreal is a hell of a trip, so flying was to be the order of the day. The flight was rustled up through Air Canada (***www.aircanada.ca***) and cost a whacking £548 through a bizarre online booking system: having filled out my details online, including my credit card, I'd have to go to a travel agent or Air Canada office to pick up my ticket. I'd then have to give all the information again and hand over my credit card – so what was the point of doing anything online?

With my itinerary sorted it was time to organise where to stay. Booking hotels online is simple; I used the hotel finding service at Travelocity (***www.travelocity.com***) for accommodation in Vancouver and Montreal.

THE SCIENCE BIT

Elton and Bernie sabotaged Jarre's electronics

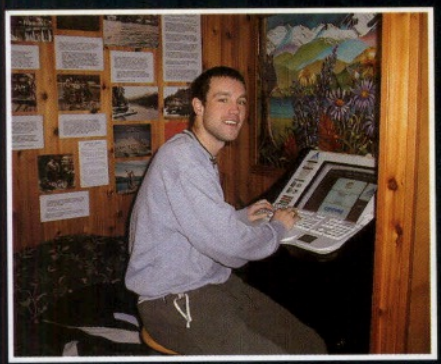
Using the Internet while travelling is simple. If you haven't got expensive kit you can use Internet cafés to surf the Net and email the folks back home. There's an excellent list of cybercafés round the world at ***www.cybercafe.com***.

Alternatively, do what I did and take a laptop computer. I used the very cute and sexy NEC Versa Lite, worth £1,500. If you don't have a built-in modem you'll need a PCMCIA card to connect the computer to the phone line. They cost around £90 each.

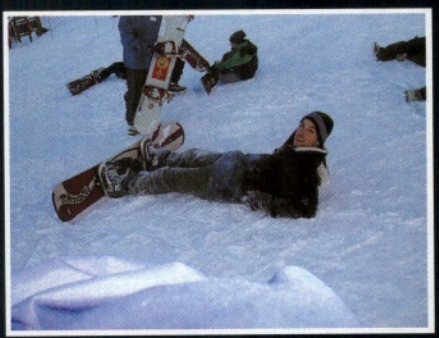
You also need an Internet Service Provider. I used AOL because you can use your membership almost anywhere in the world at local call prices. The price to access AOL differs slightly from country to country – to work out how much AOL costs in the country you are visiting simply go to Keyword: BILLING.

And if you really want to be techno-savvy on your travels take a Digital Camera and email photos to friends within minutes of taking them. I used an Agfa ePhoto CL50, £500.

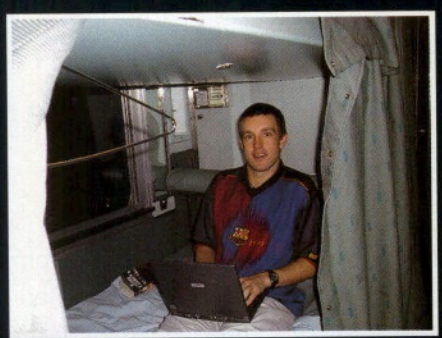
Remember phone and electrical sockets differ the world over, so take adaptors. You can find the right one at ***www.teleadapt.com*** – their kits



4 They asked him to stop, but he just kept emailing



6 ...is poise, balance, grace and elegance



9 It was just like travelling on British trains

PICTURES: ALL SPORT, KOBAL, WORLD PICTURES

THE TOURIST BIT

CANADA

The Great White North is a huge country. Montreal, on the east coast, is as near to Europe as it is to Vancouver on the west coast of the country. Its southern tip is on the latitude of Rome but the country extends as far north as the magnetic North Pole. With 90 percent of the 28.5 million population living within 100 miles of the US border, Canada is a vast, unspoilt country with the benefits of city life when you need it. ***www.travelcanada.ca***

Canada – much the same whichever way you look at it

THE PLACES

VANCOUVER

A beautiful port lying on the Pacific Ocean with wonderful waterfront views all around the city. For the best views you can take a Skyride up Grouse Mountain (*www.grouse mountain.com*) just 15 minutes from downtown – but bear in mind the spectacular views don't exist when the mountain is covered in cloud, as it was when I visited. The nearby 450-foot Capilano Suspension Bridge is also well worth a visit (*www.capbridge.com*), as is the 1,000-acre Stanley Park. How do you recognise a tourist in Vancouver during the autumn? He's the only one without an umbrella. It rains – a lot.

www.discovervancouver.com
www.virtualvancouver.com

EDMONTON

Home of the Edmonton Oilers, where the greatest ice hockey player of all time started his career. Wayne Gretzky, aka The Great One, is still revered in the city. Edmonton also boasts the world's largest shopping centre, a huge complex with shops, theme parks, a water park and other paraphernalia that was so bizarre I had to visit again to convince myself it was real. The nightlife was vibrant and we managed to find places to go even on the quieter nights of the week.

edmontonguide.net

MONTREAL

The second biggest French speaking city in the world was a culture shock after speaking English everywhere else in Canada. Highlights included the stunning Notre Dame Basilica and a 'bracing' (i.e. freezing) walk up Mount Royal which overlooks the city and gave it its name. In the real winter temperatures can go as low as -30°C, which is why Montreal also has an underground city with shops, cinemas, universities and the metro all linked so you can go for ages without having to stick your head above ground.

www.4montreal.com
www.tourism-montreal.org

To book a hotel you simply tell them where you are visiting, which part of the city you'd like to stay in, then choose from a range of options. You're offered a stack of hotels with information on facilities, location, how to get there and pricing. Choose a hotel and make your booking, but read the small print as in some countries you pay additional taxes to the price shown. Once you've registered with a site like Travelocity the idea is that it keeps your profile so you don't need to fill in your details every time you visit. Keep a close eye on this 'facility', because it did a crap job of remembering the right details. In Vancouver I arranged to stay at the Bosmans Hotel for $69 (£30) a night, and the Hotel Du Manoir St Denis in Montreal was $66.71 (£29). Neither were exactly five star, but both were perfectly acceptable and turned out to deliver everything Travelocity promised.

The other way to book accommodation is to find the site of a specific hotel or hostel: this tends to give you a better feel for the accommodation as you're able to see pictures and email the place direct. In Whistler I arranged to kip at the Hostel International (***www.hihostels.com/whi.htm***) for only $22.78 (£10) a night. That just left my stay in Edmonton to organise. While in Australia last year I became friends with a lad who lived in the city. I only knew his Web-based email address, which I'd used to keep in touch about three times in a year. One email to tell him I was coming and he insisted I stay with him – a great example of using the Net to organise accommodation. I gratefully accepted.

'I tried out skiing and snow-boarding (i.e. I fell over quite a lot)'

For the winter sports aspect of my brief, I was going to have to do some smart planning. Although thinking of four winter sports wasn't difficult, finding where to do them all in one trip was tricky. A minor point, I know, but if I was going to enjoy skiing and snowboarding then finding somewhere that had snow was always going to be helpful.

A couple of Vancouver sites extolled the virtues of nearby Grouse Mountain, but I'd already emailed the information desk and discovered there might not be snow. As I didn't fancy snowboarding on grass it was time for Plan B, which was why I booked my trip to Whistler (***www.whistler-blackcomb.com***). North America's top ski resort is just a couple of hours north of the city; another email conversation with the hostel in Whistler and I was assured I could just turn up and indulge in a range of sports.

And so to business. The flight out and first night's stay in Vancouver all went according to plan, and the good folk in Whistler weren't lying about their fine resort: I was able to try both skiing and snowboarding (i.e. I fell over a lot). I just missed out on snowmobiling but hoped to make up for that in Edmonton, so on my return to Vancouver I slogged out to the station. What VIA Rail's Web site hadn't told me was that my trip was going to be far more than just a way of getting from A to B: the price of $338.12 (£147) included excellent meals served in the dining car, a comfortable bed and some of the most beautiful scenery I'd ever seen. Imagine waking up, opening the curtains and watching snow-covered countryside rush past your window for half an hour before going for breakfast, and you'll get the gist.

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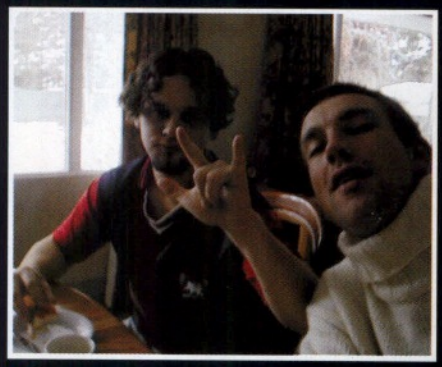
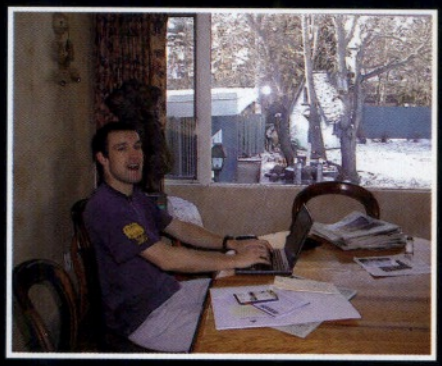
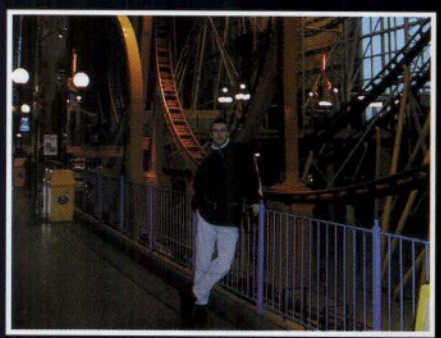


10 The secret handshake of the Canadian masons

11 Sampling the nightlife: ooh, suits you sir

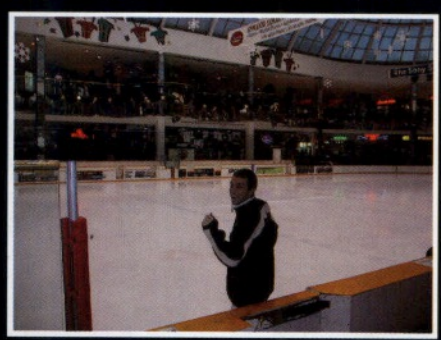


12 The young Liberace dances across the keyboard

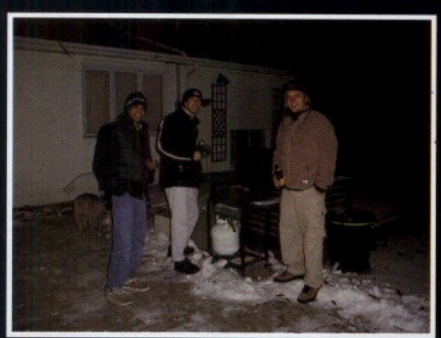


13 It was just your average shopping centre, really

'I visited the SteamWorks restaurant, simply because Beer Soup was on the menu'

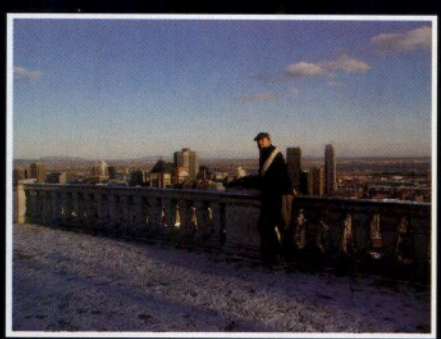


14 Where's that Jayne Torvill bird gone?



15 Having a barbecue in the snow – as you do

16 Travelling was doing nothing to help my dandruff



17 Montreal – c'est magnifique

What I thought would be a mere train ride turned out to be a real highlight.

Ice skating next. The West Edmonton Mall (***www.westedmontonmall.com***) Web site advertised an ice rink, so I grabbed the opportunity to spend some more time on my backside. When it came to ice hockey, however, I left it to the experts: an NHL game between the Edmonton Oilers and the Chicago Blackhawks was booked through Ticketmaster (***www.ticketmaster.ca***).

Of course, my stay wasn't all snow and the risk of personal injury. I've never been one to merely sample nightlife, so I took a bloody huge bite of it instead. Researching a night on the town online is possible, but there's nothing like just turning up and getting some recommendations from the locals. During my short stay in Vancouver I couldn't resist a visit to the SteamWorks bar/restaurant (***www.steamworks.com***), simply because Beer Soup was the first thing on the menu. And in Whistler I spent a very happy night at the Longhorn (***longhorn.whistler.net***).

In Edmonton my host was more than willing to help me paint the town red, and the Net came in particularly useful for retracing the staggering steps I had taken the night before but couldn't remember clearly the morning after (***www.discoveredmonton.com/Edmonton/Events Entertainment/Nightlife/***). In Montreal, however, my plans went out of the window after my first stop. I found the Hard Rock Café (***www.hardrock. com***) easily enough. They say that all HRCs are pretty much the same so you know exactly what to expect; what I didn't expect was for my waitress to kindly offer to be my tour guide. Who was I to turn down an offer like that?

'A waitress offered to be my tour guide, and who was I to refuse?'

Never one to rest on my laurels, I thought I'd have a crack at getting some of my Christmas shopping done as well. The West Edmonton Mall is, according to its Web site, the biggest shopping centre in the world, so that seemed a sensible place to start. However, although I knew that the place had an ice rink as well as shops, I didn't expect indoor rollercoasters, water parks, theme parks and arcades – which meant I was far too busy playing to buy anything.

But fortunately for my loved ones, my last stop at Montreal offered fantastic shopping both above and below ground (***www.tourismmontreal.org/shopping.htm***). Laden down with gifts, London beckoned. Now, who wants to buy the return leg of a Montreal-London flight?

CHECKLIST

WEATHER YAHOO! ***weather.yahoo.com***
CURRENCY CONVERTER ***www.xe.net/currency/***
HOLIDAY READING
NET FORCE: Hidden Agendas by Tom Clancy £5.59 ***www.amazon.co.uk***
TRAVEL INSURANCE
COLUMBUS DIRECT £55 ***www.columbusdirect.co.uk***
MUSIC
DOWNLOADS FOR MP3 PLAYER ***www.mp3.com***
WARM CLOTHING
Big Fella Fleece £61.70, Fleece Trackies £37.45, Fleece Gloves £16.60, Hipstar Hat £12.77
All from Fat Face *www.fatface.co.uk*

THANKS TO: Canadian Tourism Commission, Fat Face, www.skipages.com, Air Canada, Ross in Edmonton, Deborah in Montreal, Teleadapt.

WEBCAMMERS INVITE US INTO THEIR BEAUTIFUL HOMES

JENNIFER RINGLEY

THE DISCERNING NET USER'S PIN-UP GIRL OF CHOICE KICKS OFF OUR BEHIND THE SCENES LOOK AT WHAT MAKES WEBCAMMERS TICK

To step inside Jennifer Ringley's beautiful Washington DC flat is to see a legend in the making. From the unmade bed on which the 23 year-old beauty lies to the high-tech workstation where she communicates with adoring fans, hers is a home which oozes star quality. And what a star. Three years ago, Jenni was a poor college student, filled with dreams of stardom and riches. Then she fitted a Webcam in her dorm to record her daily life in grainy black and white and show it to the world through the Internet.

Today, JenniCam is a technicolour production that ranks among the best-known and most-visited sites on the Web, once registering 70 million impressions in a day. Its creator has been on CNN, in *Newsweek* and voted the Web's most prominent celebrity. She even has a bi-weekly online show at ***thesync.com/jennishow***.

Everything Jenni does is broadcast to thousands of subscribers paying $15 a month. And not only can visitors see the cyberstar eat, sleep, read email and (occasionally) undress for the camera, they can get inside her head, too, by reading her diaries and dream logs.

In a high-tech world, Jenni is a wired Marilyn Monroe – loved by millions,

owned by everyone. So how does the Net's golden girl explain her worldwide fame? 'Humans are very curious animals,' says Jenni, with a delicate shake of her flaxen dark hair. 'People-watching is one of humankind's greatest pastimes. I'm just taking people-watching one step further.

'I originally intended for JenniCam to be watched by my parents and a couple of friends at different colleges. It evolved spontaneously into what you see today.'

Jenni can still remember how she overcame her nerves at first baring all online, knowing (mostly male) prying eyes were watching avidly: 'For about the first two weeks, I hid behind my closet every time I got changed, but other than that I was very natural. Even as a child, I always felt like cameras were watching me anyway. I talk to myself in much the same way as I write in my journal – sort of an ongoing narrative – so the presence of the cameras never really bothered me and it doesn't really affect my behaviour at all.

'There were times when it was difficult to be as forthcoming about the tidbits of my life, but I've gained a lot of security and self-confidence. I do what I think is right, and I do it without caring what others think... I don't want to Webcast my life anymore. I just don't happen to mind.'

Surely the Net will soon be too small to house a talent so huge, though. Modelling, presenting and even acting must be on the agenda for the striking all-American beauty? Perhaps Posh and co might even consider her a suitable replacement for Geri – e-spice, maybe? Jenni's reaction is typical of her natural humour and generous hospitality: 'If I told you, I'd have to kill you.'

www.jennicam.com

Here is the nudes: is it the vague possibility of catching the merest fleeting glimpse of Jenni naked that keeps so many surfers coming back to her home page time and time again? Or is that just us being cynical?

HERE AND NOW

SIX WILD AND WACKY STUDENTS OPEN THE DOORS TO THEIR DELIGHTFUL FLAT – AND INVITE US IN FOR A BEER

Mine's a large one: no matter what those crazy kids are doing, there's bound to be drinking involved...

The empty beer bottles in the corner tell a story of their own, debris from a raucous party that spilled over into the early hours. Discarded CDs and magazines cover the floor. The aroma of cigarettes from over-flowing ashtrays hangs heavy in the air. It could be *This Life*. Actually, it's real life.

Welcome to Here And Now – the uncensored, 24-hour Truman Show, dragging Webcam technology into the 21st century. Six students from Ohio living on camera as a continuous feed rather than in an infrequently updated image.

It's the brainchild of Erik Vidal, one of the six, who roped in classmates to share a house. The whole complex set-up is financed by Erik himself.

The first broadcast in February 1999 featured only a patchy feed from the living room; now there's a camera in every room and sound, too. Soon, Erik plans 'fully interactive 3D worlds, letting viewers walk through them' followed by 'parties, plays, lectures, comedy, call-in shows and live bands.' Someone's clearly not been spending much time on his studies.

'I did very much want to be the first person to broadcast real life to the Net,' says Erik. 'With Webcams, the viewer is left with a hint of some sort of content but nothing more. You could watch Jennicam until the end of time and still have little idea what sort of person she was.'

Here And Now is very different – the rows, tears, tantrums and painfully embarrassing moments are left, warts 'n' all, for the world to watch. Not that the site's principal players ever get stage fright: 'I'd always assumed my life would never be the same again, but when the switch was flipped we all completely forgot the camera was there. It's interesting to deal with the idea that people who've never met you feel they know you.'

www.hereandnow.net

WORDS: ROBERT JEFFERY. PICTURES: CHRIS RENNIE

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VIEWCAM

PERSONAL MINIDISC

MINIDISC SYSTEM

SHARP digital

THE YELLOW WOOD LLAMAS

THE POOR MAN'S HORSES EXTEND A WARM WELCOME TO ALL AND SUNDRY IN THEIR HUMBLE YET HOMELY COUNTRYSIDE BARN

Feeding time: who could resist the worldly charms of these graceful creatures? Why not leave them playing and spitting on your computer desktop so you'll never be far from nature even when you're hard at work?

The surroundings, it must be said, are a little basic. The 'bathroom' is a water trough, and the 'bedroom' a bale of straw. There's a distinct lack of central heating, too, and the drainage leaves a lot to be desired – but then the residents of Yellow Wood Farm aren't your typical Internet entrepreneurs. In fact, they're llamas.

The remote Indianapolis farm houses a whole family of the things, and attracts hundreds of visitors a day. Not that the stars of Llamacam – who include blind llama Lewis and three-legged Buster – are the slightest bit grateful for their fame and fortune: 'We've had cables chewed and the lens has been spat on and licked,' says Webmaster Laura Keller. 'The concept of a camera is just a little too abstract for the llamas.'

Laura started the site to keep an eye on her unusual pets when she was at work; now it's got a cult following across the Web, with professional 'llama watchers' trailing their favourite llama. There are plans to add 'remote control' cams and a message board, which would flash visitors' words of encouragement into the animals' enclosure. Surely, this is what the Web was made for.

www.ywl.com

SAY CHEESE

Fancy a window on someone else's world? Here's where you'll find the best Webcams

ALL CAM
The Yahoo! of the Webcam world, and just as usable, too.

CAMCITY
www.camcity.com
Useful directory of interesting cams, including sites relevant to breaking news stories.

www.earthcam.com: earthy

CAMCITIES.COM
www.camcities.com
Webcams listed by location, from Guam to Guatemala.

CONNECT TV
ConnecTV.2nd.net
Shows you how to incorporate your favourite Webcams into your desktop.

EARTHCAM
www.earthcam.com
The best, most definitive guide on the Net. Lets you search for specific terms or browse the directory

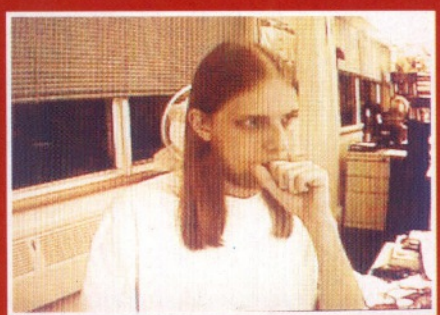
LIVE WEBCAMS
www.livewebcam.com
Claims to link to over 2,000 sites across the world.

WEBCAM CENTRAL
www.camcentral.com
Search by category or location, or sit back and see where the RandomCam option takes you.

WEBCAM WORLD
webring. webcam world.com
Vast Webring with thousands of members (but search results tend to be a tad hit and miss).

TIM AIDLEY AKA TIMMYCAM

THE COMPUTER WHIZZ FROM SURREY INVITES US INTO HIS LUXURIOUS WORKSPACE – BUT PROMISES TO KEEP HIS CLOTHES ON FOR THE TIME BEING



A fine specimen: the ladies just love to drop by Tim's cam and checkout the long-haired lothario

On first glance he might appear to be a heavy metal musician, maybe even the bassist from Bon Jovi. But these chiselled features and luscious long hair belong not to a rock god but to Tim Aidley, a 26 year-old computer games designer from Guildford – and the star of Timmycam.

Since he first started his Planet Timmy site two years ago, over 38,000 images of the Lego enthusiast and amateur rocket builder have appeared in cyberspace – more than most Hollywood actresses can boast. And yet the star of the show is only ever seen behind his desk, working.

'Some people have one look and never come back. Some have a whole load and visit frequently – including my mum,' says Tim. 'I've had viewers from every continent. I've talked to a lot of people, and I've even met a couple of them in person.'

Tim started his site with just a capture card, a Webcam and some software. Not that it's all been plain sailing – a jealous colleague hacked into Planet Timmy and turned it into a gay site during a simmering office feud. And his company PC regularly crashes under the weight of stored images and the constant clicking of the 'refresh image' button by intrigued surfers.

Still, it's turned young Tim into quite a celebrity, with a fan base eager to see a great deal more of him. 'People often mail me asking me to smile or wave, or sometimes just to have a chat. I've even had the occasional request to get my kit off – unfortunately I can't oblige because the camera is in my office.'

The good news is that a second Timmycam will soon be in operation at its owner's house. Form an orderly queue, ladies...

www.planettimmy.demon.co.uk

The Webcam challenge

Webcams are all around us, shadowing our every move and broadcasting to the world. But just how many cameras can you appear on in a single day? While other magazines would have been content to send a harassed staffer in a tawdry animal costume out on the road to find out, we dispatched our cyber-columnist and all-round professional primate, Mail Monkey. Armed only with a giant copy of *the net* and his unfailing charm and wit, the brief was to blag his hairy mug onto as many Webcams as possible in and around London. As our team sat glued to their screens back in the office, this is what he got up to – in his own words, of course. And if you're inspired by such bravery, see below...

WORDS: MAIL MONKEY; PHOTOGRAPHY: CHRIS RENNIE

NOW IT'S YOUR TURN

Think it's easy, do you? Reckon you can get on more Webcams in just a day than Mail Monkey? Or perhaps you'd like to appear on a notable cam dressed ridiculously (though please note the word *dressed*). Email us your snaps (preferably screen grabs from the relevant site), the URL concerned and your details at webcam@thenetmag.co.uk. All half-decent shots will appear in the mag and on our Web site. Fame beckons!

PLACE RoostaCam, Chessington
TIME 4:40pm
Andy Nicholls has two Webcams at his personal site. But no home is complete without a primate.
www.roosta.com/chessicam.html

PLACE Cyberia Internet Café, Whitfield St, London
TIME 9:30am
The delightful staff at London's biggest Net café made your correspondent feel right at home. Don't know what the bloke behind me's laughing at, though.
www.cyberiacafe.net/cams.html

PLACE Guildhall University
TIME 10:00am
John Main's cam is in the IT department. He is now in a state of shock.
www.lgu.ac.uk/~jmain/pages/webcam.html

PLACE Virgin Radio, London
TIME 11:00am
No sign of Evans here. Afraid of being upstaged in the looks department?
www.virginradio.com/mag/webcams.htm

PLACE The Millennium Dome
TIME 12:45pm
Here's a snap of the butt of jokes across the nation. And the Dome.
news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/static/domecam

PLACE Leicester Square
TIME 2:30pm
Damned if I can spot myself here. Write in with the answer and win some bananas... *www.CapitalFM.com*

PLACE London Transport Museum, Covent Garden
TIME 2:45pm
Tourists are suckers for a monkey.
www.ltmuseum.co.uk/piazzacam

PLACE ChessiCam, Chessington
TIME 4:30pm
Imagine Andy's surprise as I drop in on him! *www.roosta.com/chessicam.html*

'I SAID SELL, YOU WITCH!'

Playing the stock market is no longer the exclusive preserve of bowler-hatted City gents – thanks to the Internet, more people than ever are buying and selling shares from the comfort of their living rooms. So *the net* handed John Duncan three grand, and told him to make us all rich...

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Professional Percussion, London 0171 485 4434
Drumwright Ltd, Reading 0118 944 1418
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YAMAHA

www.yamaha.co.uk

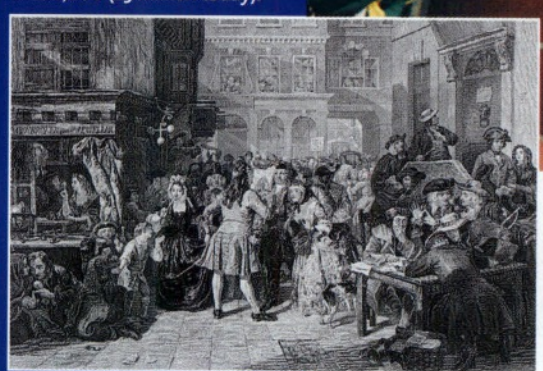
Leeson: not a winner

'Bob – you've got the water slide. Ronnie – chalet patrol...'

ONLINE TRADING

WHEN THE BUBBLE BURST

Modern brokers might curse 'Black Monday' and the crash of '87, but boom and bust cycles have always been a part of the stock market – and the daddy of them all was the collapse of the South Sea Bubble in 1720. The South Sea Company had been formed in 1711 to assume the national debt of Great Britain, whereby the debt was taken over by a group of merchants. British trade in the South Seas and South America was also given to these merchants – an enormously profitable monopoly that triggered nation-wide speculation in South Sea Company shares. The result was an explosion in the stock price: on 1 January 1720 it was £128 per share; by June it was £1,050. But all good things must come to an end; in September the chairman and some directors sold out, the bubble burst and share prices collapsed. The result was ruin for thousands. Even Sir Isaac Newton got sucked in: having made £7,000 by selling near the top of the market, he promptly reinvested – and racked up a loss of £20,000 (£3 million today).



'I can calculate the motions of the heavenly bodies,' he said later, 'but not the madness of people.' *βis.dal.ca/~dmcneil/bubble.html*

PICTURES: STEVE ORINO, REX, MARY EVANS PICTURE LIBRARY, IMAGEBANK

FIVE WEEKS IS NOT A HUGE AMOUNT OF time in which to make a heap of cash, but I'd been funded to the tune of £3,000 by *the net* (along with lots of muttering about wanting all of it back by the end of November). And like the boys in the City, I found that a touch of pressure concentrated the mind. So I made two decisions upfront: first, to split the cash three ways so as not to spread my research too thinly; and second, to spend up to a week looking at as many relevant sites as possible before taking the plunge.

'All I had to do now was take a deep breath and plunge in for short-term growth'

I was to be a buyer on 1 November and a seller on 29 November. In between, I would monitor my progress, try to stay calm and rehearse my excuses. The timescale meant that dividends – that is, any income I received from simply owning my shares – would not be an issue, so all I had to do now was take a deep breath and plunge in for short-term growth.

Newton: no head for trading after that apple incident

After a week's research, I finally took both a deep breath and the plunge, and went for stocks I thought had potential in the technology or Internet-related areas – partly because the London Stock Exchange was about to launch a new 'index' (a grouping of like-minded companies) called TechMARK, which already seemed to be creating a fair bit of interest.

Great Universal Stores (***www.gus.co.uk***) knows about home shopping, has a big customer base and looks a complete natural for e-commerce. I also spotted that a new chief executive had been appointed and an e-commerce director taken on board. £1,000 invested at £4.70 per share therefore seemed worthwhile.

Interx (***www.interx.co.uk***), meanwhile, has been pretty uninspiring for ages, but has been banging on for a while about launching the world's largest Web site for IT equipment. Surely time for something to happen as a result? £1,000 invested at £2.70 per share.

Lastly, I opted for Arm Holdings (***www.arm.com***): something of a rarity in the sector, it actually makes profits as well as chips, and seems well regarded in product, marketing and management terms. £1,000 invested at £18 per share.

So, how did I arrive at my three choices? Unsurprisingly, there's no shortage of investor information on the Web, but the quality varies enormously. And you just can't look at everything, otherwise you would never get to buy a share.

That said, information providers can be divided into roughly four categories: portals, companies, media and brokers. Among the portal sites, Motley Fool (***www.fool.co.uk***) deserves an early mention for its wit, clarity and for being a site that offers more help than most, particularly for those of us new to

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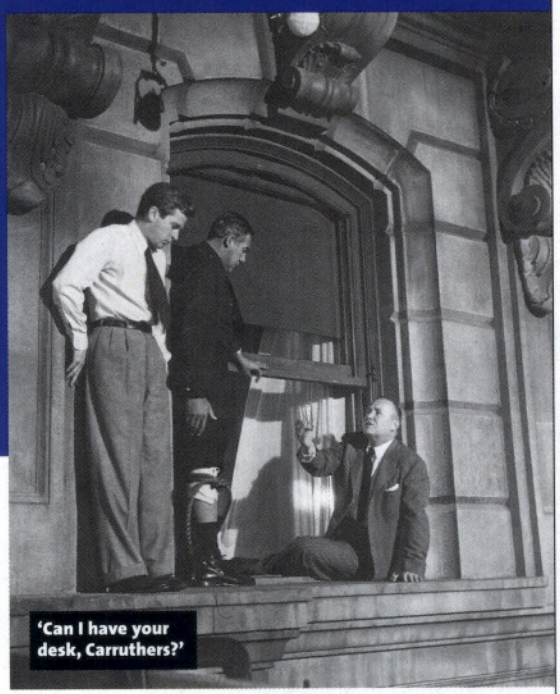
DAY TRADING: THE TRUTH

Day trading is all about making a quick buck on the Internet, and is an activity far more familiar to Americans than Brits. Stories of New York cabbies making fortunes in their spare time are plentiful, but in practice well over two-thirds of day traders end up losing money. Without unlimited finance, time, continuous Internet access, patience, judgement and, above all, nerve, you're likely to be much better off making long-term stock market investments.

Day trading – that is, buying and selling shares on the same day – needs to offer plenty of opportunities for investors to get in and out of the market, often having made only a small profit on an individual deal. This means the availability of plenty of stocks that have both a volatile share price and loads of 'liquidity' – in other words, the share price needs to jump around a great deal and there also need to be plenty of buyers and sellers in the market. This applies most of all when you need to sell your investment and have to find a willing buyer. In a hurry.

Those sorts of trading conditions can be found in the States, but are far more elusive over here. And that's by no means the only obstacle facing would-be day traders in the UK: here you must pay Government stamp duty of 0.5 percent on every purchase. US day traders are often happy to make that margin of profit on a deal – which could be wiped out by stamp duty. That is, of course, before the broker takes his commission; this can vary enormously, but rates in general are typically higher here than on the other side of the pond.

The Financial Services Authority in this country actively discourages day trading. Go to ***www.sib.co.uk/alerts/day-trading.htm*** where it sets out its concerns. In addition, the online brokers say that they look to attract 'normal' investors, not day traders. So unless the tax and commission structures in this country change dramatically, you'll not make a penny on this fool's gamble.


'Can I have your desk, Carruthers?'

the investment game. In other words, you.

Interactive Investor International (***www.iii.co.uk***) offers a great, broad-based source of information — and sometimes inspiration. I'm also a big fan of ***www.hemscott.com***; not least because it offers access to a database covering hundreds of quoted companies with details on profit and share price performance, directors' share dealings and brokers' forecasts. Register with ***www.ukonlineinvesting.com*** and you'll receive regular reports, which are a terrific source of guidance on almost every aspect of investment decision-making. And ***www.tipsheets.co.uk*** will steer you to authorised investor newsletters.

Many of these sites simply require you to register and are then absolutely free; others you need to use as an ISP or stump up a modest monthly subscription for.

Another good source of information are companies themselves. Virtually all the outfits traded in the stock market have their own Web sites: you can find company announcements, histories, activities and other investor related matters on the best.

Newspapers, broadcasters and wire services also offer financial sites, which are often excellent sources of up-to-date news, shares to follow and archive material. ***www.ft.com*** is a good example, as is ***www.telegraph.com***; both can be particularly strong in analysing company results. ***www.thisislondon.co.uk*** offers the influential *Evening Standard* business pages, which are updated throughout the day. And anyone up early on Sunday will find that ***www.pigeon.co.uk*** gives a summary of the newspapers' business stories even as the church bells ring.

8 NOVEMBER
END OF WEEK ONE

GUS has gone nowhere – now £4.50, down 20p.
Interx is about as exciting, at £2.57, down 13p.
Must stay calm about Arm. Up by £1.82 to £19.82 – more than 10 percent in seven days!

GO FOR BROKER

After reading everything possible on your choice of shares, the next step is to find a broker — online, of course. The choice is growing daily, as is the availability of commission-free dealing (buying and selling stocks without paying a fee) for various periods — often in the shape of introductory offers. So shop around. For the most up-to-date information of brokers' commission rates, check out the Motley Fool site. Leaving freebies to one side, the lowest charge for a £1,000 deal was £9; the most expensive £25.

If you're tempted to use a broker you don't know, check their service before trading. Brokers' online level of accessibility and response time can be patchy, as can the range of services. Barclays (***www.barclays-stockbrokers.co.uk***) offers real-time dealing, and claims to get you the best possible price. Stocktrade (***www.stocktrade.co.uk***) and Charles Schwab (***www.schwab-worldwide.com./europe***) were online pioneers in the UK, and offer real-time prices and services. There are others, but they all act as 'execution-only' brokers, buying and selling as you instruct them.

Advisory services are available to clients of some of these, and from other brokers, particularly for those people with serious money to invest. ***www.killik.co.uk*** is typical of this breed, with a good track record for analysis of technology specialists and medium-sized companies.

WHEN DAY TRADING GOES WRONG

Saucer-eyed City boys get rid of the stress of trading by swilling a bottle of Bolly and going for a weekend's paintballing – two activities the good citizens of Atlanta must wish Mark Barton had taken up. Barton, 44, was attempting to earn a living by day trading out of a couple of offices in Atlanta's financial district, but a bad run in the summer of 1999 had culminated in losses of more than $100,000. His solution? The crazed trader first killed his wife and family, calmly drove into town, chatted with fellow speculators about the state of the stock market, then shot nine of them dead before turning the gun on himself. 'It's been a bad day,' he informed his colleagues seconds before the slaughter, 'but it's going to get worse.'

Atlanta Journal-Constitution: *www.ajc.com*

NOVEMBER 15 WEEK TWO

GUS looking a bit of a dog
Down *another* 28p to £4.22.
Interx still fails to excite, but gains 5p to £2.62.
Arm shows more serious gains: £22.44, up another £2.62. Nearly 25 percent ahead in 14 days. He he he!

PORTFOLIOS

Share prices (either real-time or delayed by twenty minutes) are easily obtainable from brokers, portals and the media — just look for any site that offers quotes. What's much more fun is to input details of your portfolio on a site which updates its value, alerts you to news about any of your investments, and even lets you have an exchange of views with other interested shareholders. There's no reason why you shouldn't keep your portfolio with one broker and deal with another. The portfolio set-ups at ***www.freequotes.co.uk*** and ***www.moneyworld.co.uk*** are excellent; the latter is also a very useful source of information.

22 NOVEMBER ONE WEEK TO GO

GUS heading rapidly in the wrong direction. Lost another 32p to £3.90. Performing like England (choose your sport).

Interx loses another couple of pence. Proving positively yawn-inspiring.
More strength to your Arm: £25.13, up a further £2.69, making £7.13 in 21 days. A rise of nearly 40 percent. We're in the money...

ONE MAN'S PROFIT...

Of course, the stock market isn't a licence to print money. As you can see from our experiences, prices can and do plummet as well as rise. For every person who makes a profit, someone else makes a loss. Markets can also go up and down without warning, and big investors will always get the news before you do. Particularly the bad news.

Don't chase willy-nilly after the latest tip you read on the Web. Do your research, read what experts say and be prepared to invest for the long-term. If in doubt, play the investment games offered on many sites to get experience before you deal for real. And if you buy online, *never* double-click. You could be the proud owner of twice as many shares as you intended.

'Never double-click. You might buy twice as many shares as you want'

For more tips, look at ***www.londonstockex.co.uk***, which has loads of info on site, as well as many useful links. Visit also ***www.proshare.org.uk***, which seeks to encourage wider share ownership and will help you if you want to become involved in an investment club, a sensible and fun way to start dabbling in shares. Email ***susan@proshare.org.uk*** if you want to know more.

29 NOVEMBER THE DAY OF RECKONING
Leap out of bed when the markets open!
Sell GUS at £4, just 10p up on the week, and down 70p over the four weeks. Proceeds: £851. Got out just in time, actually. On 2 December, it warned that profits would be lower than expected – and by close of play the price had crashed to £3.40. Phew.
Interx goes at £2.50, just 20p less than I paid. £925 back in the kitty. But the sting is in the tail. By close of business on Monday they'd soared to £3.27 and finish the next day at £4.10. The chart makes interesting viewing. I am not amused.
But Arm remains the star and saves my bacon. I sell at a massive £30.25, an overall gain of £12.25, or 68 percent. Proceeds: £1,680.

FOOL'S GOLD

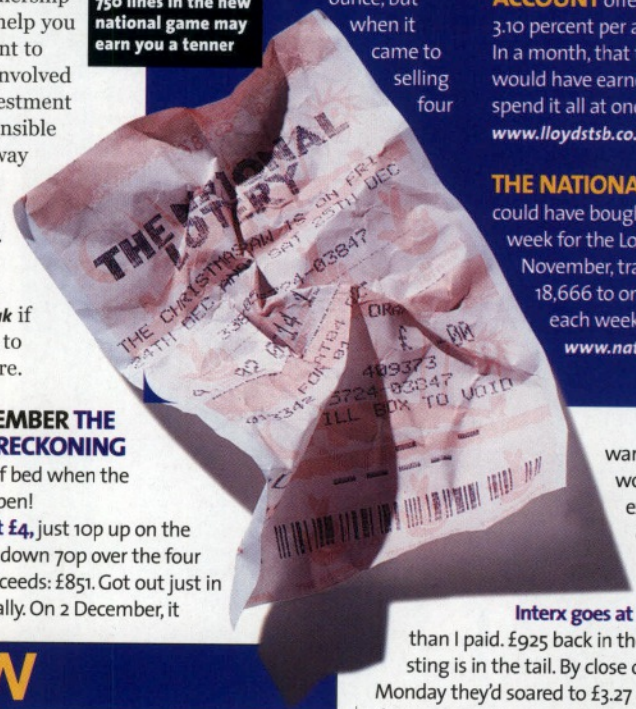
What else might we have done with that £3,000?

GOLD might glisten, but it would have lost us money over the period. We'd have bought at around $293.85 per ounce, but when it came to selling four weeks later, the price was down to $293.10. We'd have lost about eight quid on the 'precious' metal.
www.goldrushgallery.com

A LLOYDS TSB INSTANT CLASSIC GOLD SAVINGS ACCOUNT offers interest of 3.10 percent per annum before tax. In a month, that three grand would have earned £7.75. Don't spend it all at once...
www.lloydstsb.co.uk

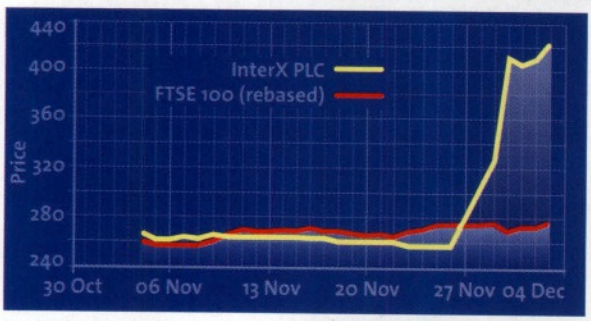
THE NATIONAL LOTTERY We could have bought 750 tickets a week for the Lottery during November, translating into an 18,666 to one shot of winning each week. Great!
www.national-lottery.co.uk

750 lines in the new national game may earn you a tenner



THE CHART SHOW

How the money was won and lost: these graphs chart the progress of our three runners and riders alongside the ups and downs of the FTSE



The fall and fall of Great Universal (above). The small rise at the end is an example of 'dead cat bounce' – an upward turn produced purely by the calamitous fall preceeding it. The yellow rule marks the progress of the share price, while the red line charts the progress of the FTSE from the same starting point.

But it wasn't all gloom and doom – well, not completely. Rather inconsiderately, Interx (above) decided to show an upturn after we sold at £2.50. However, let's hear it for ARM (right) which delivered a 68 percent gain. A number of sites offer similar charted data – try www.hemscott.com or www.ft.com

CHANCE YOUR ARM

The total in the pot is £3,456, less stamp duty of half of a percent. Not a bad month's work – but I got lucky with Arm. And you can see that, apart from picking the right shares in the first place, timing is enormously important – and *far* easier to get wrong than right.

There's money to be made... but don't give up that day-job yet.

ADDITIONAL SITES

PORTALS AND INFORMATION SOURCES

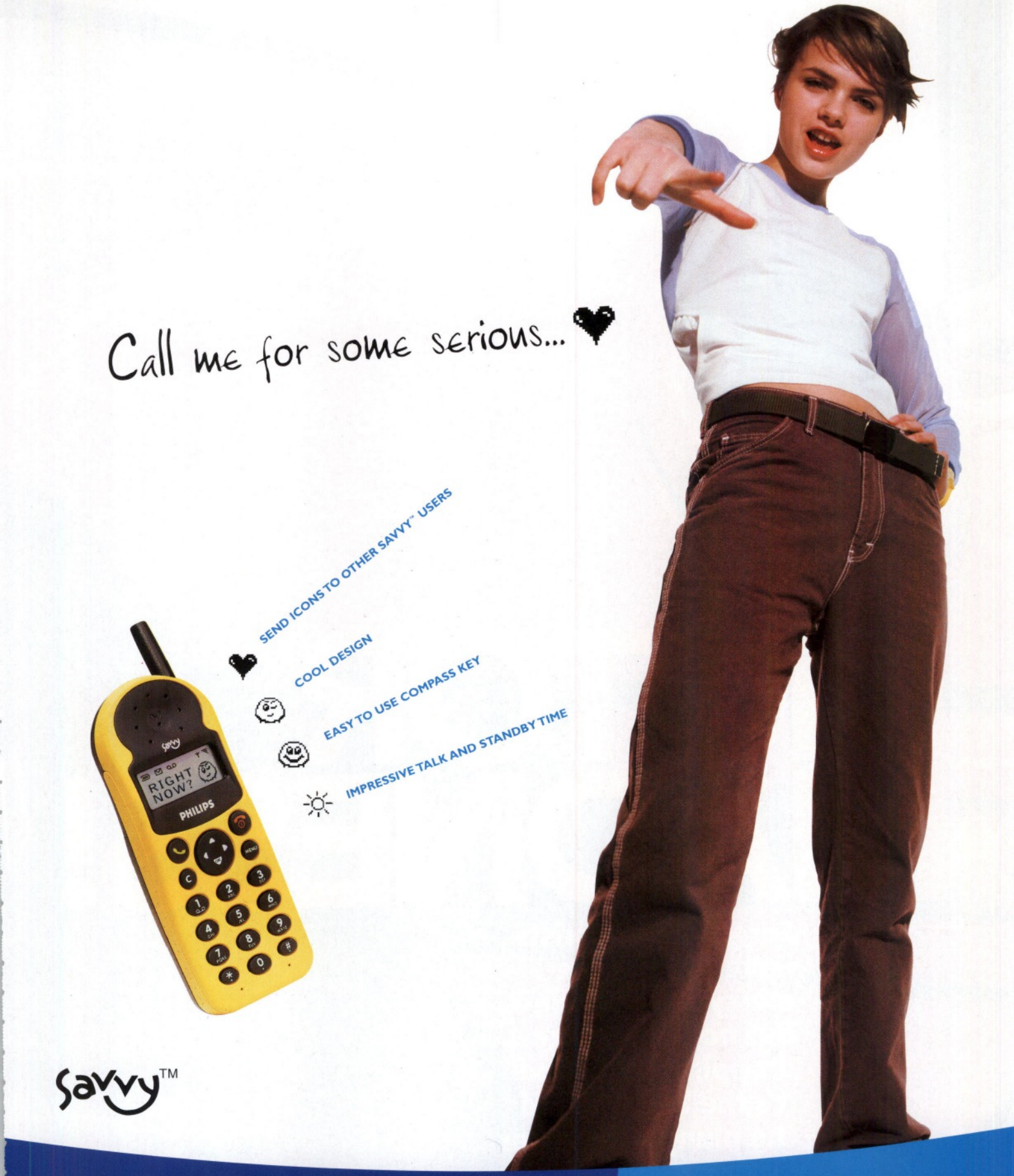
www.marketeye.co.uk They'll send you a weekly email full of market chat.
www.carol.co.uk Good source of annual reports.
www.new-online-investor.co.uk Labour-saving site with links to brokers, companies and much more.

MEDIA

www.investorschronicle.co.uk Masses of relevant information. Good list of brokers and costs.
www.bloomberg.co.uk For the latest finance news.
www.thisismoney.com Takes you to the *Daily Mail* and *Mail on Sunday*.

BROKERS

www.tdwaterhouse.co.uk The second largest discount broker in the world.
www.dljdirect.co.uk Experienced online broker with American roots.
www.xest.com
Offers near real-time dealing.



He often sends me messages on my new Savvy™ mobile phone. I can send them too. It's very easy to send him words and pictures like these emotion icons. No other mobile phone has them. They leave him in no doubt about how I feel. And with Savvy's great looks, I couldn't imagine myself without it.

The Philips Savvy is currently available in the BT Cellnet U Pre-Pay package as the Philips C12. For more information please call 0500 787828.

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PHILIPS

Let's make things better.

MOTOR MADNESS!

For years, motorists have been at the mercy of car dealers. But now prices are dropping fast – and it's the Web behind the plunge. Whether buying new, second-hand or from abroad, here's how to save a fortune on your motor

WORDS: BEN OLIVER; PICTURE: DAVID VENNI

Buying a car online: not like making love to a beautiful woman at all

KATE HUMBLE INTERVIEW: GARY PARKINSON; PICTURES: BBC, DAVID VENNI, MOVIESTORE, CLASSIC AND SPORTSCAR,

CHOOSING YOUR NEXT MOTOR

Whether you're buying new or used, you'll need some advice. So it's purchasing every car mag on the shelves, or economise by asking Dave from the pub. 'What you want is an Allegro. Classic. As it happens, my brother-in-law has one for sale. 1975, maroon. It's out the back, actually...'

Or you could go home and log on to one of the motoring Web sites. For an amusing selection of complaints, look at ***www.carsurvey.org***, where disgruntled owners can post details of what's just fallen off their brand new motor. And if you're worried that people might laugh at you, make sure your new auto doesn't appear in the Ugly Car Web site (***www.stokesey.demon.co.uk/ugly/uglycar.html***). And if you want to find out just what you can get for your cash, click on the 'Affordability Calculator' at ***www.autohit.com***.

Once you know what you're after, try What Car Online (***www.whatcar.co.uk***) where you can search an archive of unbiased road tests. It's free, and it will even give you insurance quotes and loan terms so you can find out if you can afford a McLaren.

It's £15,768,987.01 per month. You can't.

BUYING NEW

Determined to buy a new, UK-sourced car? Then wave goodbye to your weekends. Start doing the rounds of shiny showrooms full of screaming kids and parents too intent on shaving the last fifty quid off their deal to do anything about it. Get used to bad coffee and overbearing salesmen called Nigel clad in blazers and ill-fitting grey Farah slacks. And keep your wits about you – Nigel isn't as daft as he looks, and will waste no opportunity to bolt you into whatever's been on the forecourt longest at an exorbitant price and a usurious rate of interest...

Sadly, the Web can't take all the pain out of buying a new car. You'll still have to deal with Nigel at some stage – despite the hype, you can't yet complete the whole process from the comfort of your front room.

Vauxhall (***buypower.vauxhall.co.uk***) was one of the first online. It offers three 'dotcom' models only available from its Web site – yours for up to a grand less than similarly-specced models. You get to choose the car, preview the colour and work out a finance package online. The only thing the salesman has to do is finalise the credit details, check your trade-in isn't a write-off and try to flog you some profitable optional extras.

Better get used to bad coffee and salesmen called Nigel

If it works, instead of wasting hours and hours you'll have done the hard work over the Net. You save cash which you can blow on furry dice, and you get a car with a natty '.com' logo that lets the world know you're a Net user.

But Vauxhall is far from the only manufacturer with a Web presence. Everyone from BMW (***www.bmw.co.uk***) to Jaguar (***www.jaguar.co.uk***) is getting in on the act, while Ford is currently trialling a Net sales service in Finland and plans to roll it out across Europe within 12 months. And major UK firms such as Virgin, zoom.com and the Arcadia group are all planning to enter the fray during 2000 with sites that will let you complete the entire buying process online. If they live up to the billing, you'll be able to place your order, sit back and wait for someone to arrive with the keys. Just like ordering pizza.

Want your new wheels now? Prefer to buy the traditional way? The Web can still help. First, give your chosen manufacturer's Web site a thorough browse.

Dotcom models: still Vauxhalls

Do your homework and decide in advance what you want and how much you'll pay

They'll all give you lots of pictures of cars inexplicably parked in front of gliders. The best ones, like ***www.ford.co.uk***, list all the trim levels, options and prices. You'll already know which model you're after, so this is the stuff you'll be negotiating with Nigel. If you only start thinking about it in the showroom, it's too late. He already has you in his power. So do your homework, decide in advance what you want and how much you'll pay, and you'll strike a far better deal.

Second, use a dealer listing such as ***www.autolocate.co.uk*** to contact Nigels nationwide with your precise requirements – an increasing number of sales teams take email enquiries. Just going to your local franchise rarely yields the best deal. The more you ask, the more likely you are to find a salesman with a cancelled order or too much stock; you'll be surprised at how prices can tumble. Would you travel a hundred miles to save £500? Very probably.

BUYING ABROAD

Even the grand you could save buying your new wheels online won't make it as cheap as one you buy on the continent. It's not a secret any more; the manufacturers have been ripping us off for years. Seems they think we're a soft touch.

But take a short trip across the Channel and you could save up to 40 percent on UK prices. The claims made on Web sites like ***www.carimporting.co.uk*** are – on the whole – true. Prices here in the UK are over-inflated; basic prices in other countries are low to allow for heavy new car taxes, which you don't pay. Hence the savings.

You've got three choices. You can search the Net to find a dealer in Europe and do all

Seaman Herbie paid for leading the mutiny

KATE HUMBLE

Daley: lovable

What with Jeremy Clarkson's loathsome hair and the gurning Quentin Wilson, no one used to tune into *Top Gear* to enjoy the company of the presenters. But all that's changed with the arrival of former model Kate Humble, whose friendly face has proved a breath of fresh air amidst the wheels, chrome and petrol fumes. But would our Kate buy a new motor online?

'I would, having done a piece on it for *Top Gear*. I asked a guru all the questions a punter would be concerned about – you're handing over a lot of money via a computer, is it safe? – and he said take the right advice, shop around and always go with reputable names and you'll get the most amazing deals. I thought, "This is great! You never have to see a slimy salesman again".'

What about the risks?
Make sure you know your stuff, but apparently by the end of the year 10 percent of cars bought in this country will be purchased online.

Have you ever tried to find a car mechanic on the Net?
No – I've got Quentin. I just phone him up and say 'Q, sort this out'. And he says, 'You're driving a hateful diesel, what do you expect?'

What car do you drive?
I still drive that famous diesel – a Peugeot 306 L-reg with not a single added extra anywhere on it. Oh, apart from a sunroof which I blagged for free. It was before *Top Gear* – I was just another lippy blonde.

I've been thinking about a new car, but you drive it off the forecourt and that's ten grand out the window, so I'd always go for a second-hand car.

We did a piece not long ago on convertibles. I've driven an old N900i Saab, an old G-reg, and it was fantastic. So that's what I'm after. Maybe I'll look around a few Web sites...

What was your first car?
A Beetle, when I was living in South Africa. I have a great fondness for the old Beetles, they're fab – I don't like the new ones so much. But it was incredibly badly behaved – it had a mind of its own. It would be fine one day, then not start at all the next. A part-time car. It was completely hopeless but I did love it.

What car did you pass your driving test in?
I did it in the instructor's car because my mum wasn't brave enough to lend me hers. I've got a horrible feeling it was one of those completely grim Austin Metros.

Did you pass first time?
No, I didn't – and I'm proud of the fact because everyone who passes second time is a far better driver. I passed the second time because there wasn't a cyclist in the way; the first time, the instructor gave it a sneaky 'Oh, turn left here please Miss Humble,' so I blindly turned left not knowing that there was a cyclist in my path. And I didn't quite get the cyclist, so I lost points for that too – I failed my test and didn't even have a good story at the end of it. He also failed me because my first Highway Code question was 'What does MSM stand for?' and I just looked at him and said 'Maidenhead School of Motoring?'

Finally, when buying a second-hand car, would you go for Arthur Daley, Swiss Toni or Frank Butcher?
Arthur Daley, because he's lovable. I've got a coat like him and he's crap at lying.

BEETLE NEWS AT
www.beetlebuzz.com
FRANK BUTCHER FOR LONDON'S MAYOR:
geocities.com/SunsetStrip/Stadium/1123/page7.html
PEUGEOT
www.peugeot.co.uk

autohit .com

It's everything about

cars

Read reviews, keep up-to-date with motoring news, search for a new or used car, get a quote or arrange insurance, check a used vehicle valuation, find a cherished number plate, arrange a vehicle inspection, sort out a hire purchase quote, get help after a road accident and lots more besides...

www.autohit.com

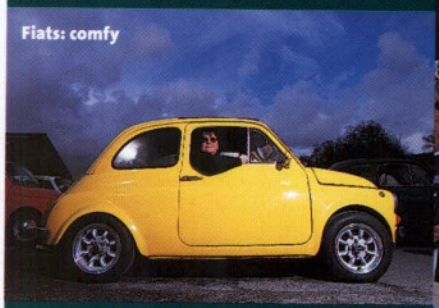
THREE-WHEELER FANS UNITE!

Whatever car you've just bought second-hand, there'll be a club on the Net to support it – useful for advice on specialist services, parts and suppliers when pieces inevitably start dropping off. The marque best catered for must be the Mini. An all-encompassing starting point is The Mini WWW Directory at *www.comp.glam.ac.uk/~minis/minilinks.htm*, a subdivision of an online project called 'Oh my God, Dad – that car's teeny!'. At the International MOC Register (*www.mini33.freeserve.co.uk/miniwww/club.htm*), you'll find additional contact details for Mini owners' clubs worldwide. Elsewhere, the official site at *www.mini.co.uk* points out that 'Mini' is now a brand of the BMW Group. Get used to it.

For anyone who enjoys getting above 55mph, the Porsche Enthusiasts Club (*www.tipec.org.uk*) is, like the cars, sleek and attractive. MG devotees should go straight to *www.mgcars.org.uk*, while fans of classic Jags can do no better than drop in at *www.jec.org.uk*, which has plenty of helpful stuff including valuation charts.

From the sublime to the Ford Cortina. Aficionados are catered for at *www.jsm-net.zdemon.co.uk/cortina/fcoc.html*; and, if you really want to know, there's a site for Reliant Robins at *devnull.owl.de/~cp/ReliantWeb*.

For other makes of motor, try the Classic Motor Monthly site at *www.classicmotor.co.uk* – it includes brilliant links and a truly comprehensive contacts listing.



Fiats: comfy

'I've got just the car for you, Mr Corbett'

PICTURES: BBC, CLASSIC AND SPORTSCAR

Once he'd got the blood off, Frank soon flogged his motor

the legwork yourself. Or you can use one of the import agents currently springing up to take advantage of the burgeoning cross-Channel trade. For a fixed fee they'll find an overseas dealer with a good price, sort the paperwork out at both ends and get the car from there to here. Agents like Grey UK (*www.greyuk.co.uk*) and VH Cars (*www.vhcars.co.uk*) will source almost any car for you, buying it in the country that offers the greatest savings over UK prices. Their Web sites are useful, offering online quotes and buyers' guides. But to do the deal you'll need to phone, or go and see them.

Just as with UK-sourced cars, the big boys are starting to move in. Internet service provider Totalise (*www.totalise.co.uk/carsave*) offers a full online service, acting as your intermediary with the agents to make sure you get the best deal. And from early 2000 oneswoop.com, a new venture from Marks & Spencer, will be offering imported VWs, Audis, Vauxhalls, Fords, Peugeots and Rovers. You can also arrange low-cost finance at the same time from the M&S financial services division.

The third option is Carbidder's online import auction. The idea is simple. Carbidders buy the cars and bring them into the country. Then they hold an online Dutch auction, with the asking price starting at the UK list price and dropping by £100 every 10 seconds. You hang on for as long as your nerves hold, before hitting the 'buy' button. Carbidder (*www.car-bidder.co.uk*) takes a £500 deposit on your credit card, and when you've either paid or financed the balance you can take delivery. You don't get as much choice as a regular agent, but you do get impressive savings without having to wait.

You've bought a sheepskin coat and learnt how to kick tyres

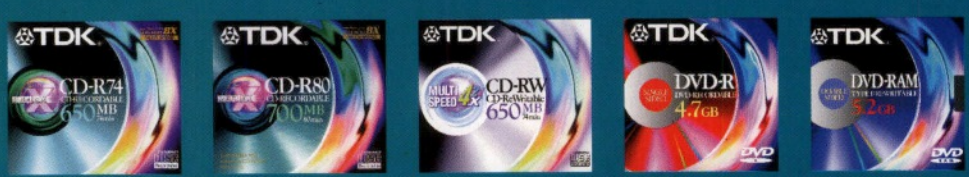
BUYING USED

You're convinced you're the next Quentin Wilson. You've bought a sheepskin coat and learnt how to kick tyres, shake your head and make tut-tutting noises all at the same time. Determined to bag a bargain, you rise at dawn to get a copy of the small ads paper hot off the presses. But everyone you phone has already sold to a fast-working dealer with bundle of grubby twenties. They are predators, these people. You hesitate,

What is i-Storage?

- 25 TDK 74 min/650Mb Reflex CD-R
- High impact plastic box construction
- Individual protective Tyvek® sleeves
- Requires 36% of the space of 25 CD cases
- Complete with file tabs and adhesive labels
- Perfect for easy and safe storage and archiving

Tyvek® is a DuPont registered trademark



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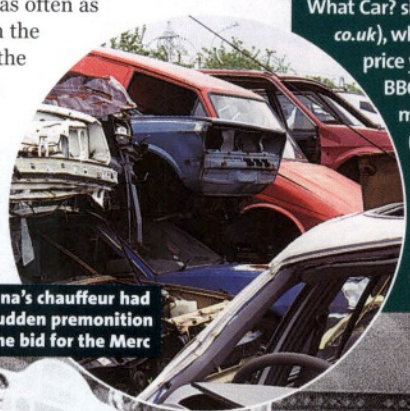
People think that going out to buy a second-hand car will be like Minder

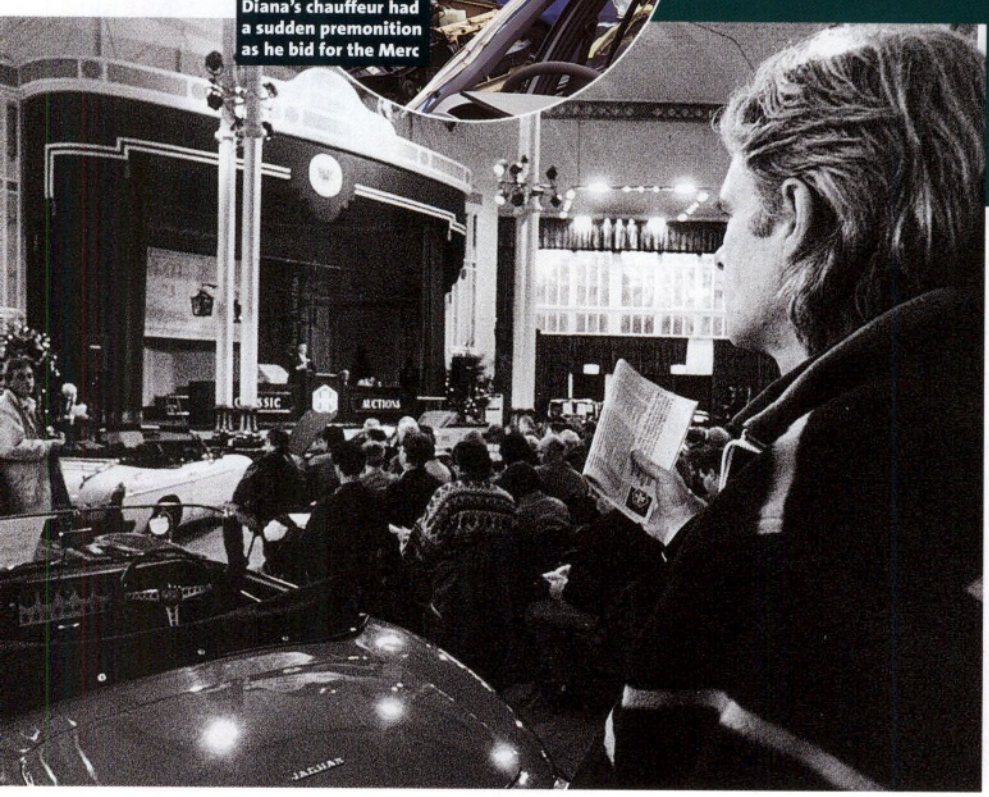
you die. So you head for the nearest used car lot, where you find all the cars you phoned about this morning on sale again at a £500 mark-up.

People think that going out to buy a second-hand car will be like starring in an episode of *Minder*. It won't. It will be worse, much worse – unless you've done your homework. But there's a mass of information on every type of motor out there, and online ads and auctions have really opened things up for private buyers. If you use the Net properly you'll clean up.

Get online and go to Autotrader (***www.autotrader.co.uk***) and Exchange and Mart (***www.exchangeandmart.co.uk***). Instead of wading through acres of grubby newsprint, you can type in your exact requirements and have the closest matches displayed by price or proximity. This is your turf, and you've got the edge on the salesmen here. Many sellers only advertise on the Net. You can see cars from all around the country, get a clear idea of how much you ought to be paying, check for new ads as often as you like and get on the blower as soon as the right motor comes up. Another comprehensive site is Fish4cars (***www.fish4cars.co.uk***) which, as we went to press, had 187,307 vehicles on its database – enough to keep even the fussiest car hunter occupied for a few minutes. It can also provide information on finance, insurance and car performance.



Diana's chauffeur had a sudden premonition as he bid for the Merc



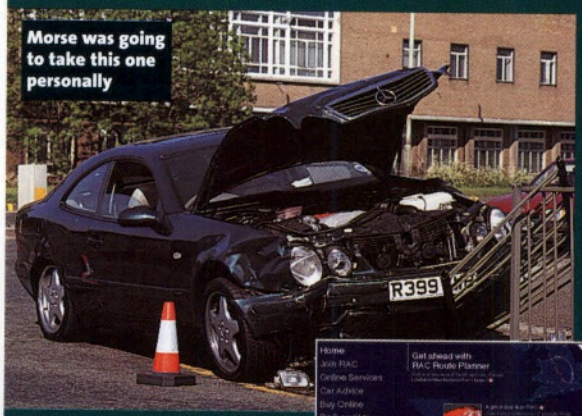
PICTURES: CLASSIC AND SPORTSCAR, QUADRANT

Buying from a main agent, however, brings greater peace of mind, as the cars are all checked and warrantied before sale. The Network Q used division (***www.network-q.co.uk***) has a fully searchable Web site.

The last – and the iffiest – option is buying at an online second-hand auction. They are no place for the faint-hearted, but Yahoo has regular auctions at ***uk.auctions.yahoo.com***. The cars are reasonably priced, but you have to ask yourself why.

But before online car-buying really takes off, there's a question that needs answering: would you *really* spend £25,000 on a motor you'd only seen on the Net? If you would, or already have, write to us at ***inbox@thenetmag.co.uk***. You could be changing an entire industry.

DON'T GET DONE



Morse was going to take this one personally

Buying a second-hand car, whether via the Net or by traditional methods, is a risky business. So how do you avoid getting ripped off?

Start by reading what the Office of Fair Trading has to say: go to ***www.oft.gov.uk/html/consume/car.htm*** for advice on buying from dealers, private sellers and at auction. Two more good sources of general information are the What Car? site (***www.whatcar.co.uk***), which will help you price your purchase, and BBC *Top Gear* magazine (***www.topgear.beeb.com***), where you can find out what existing owners feel about cars you're considering buying in the JD Power Satisfaction Survey.

When you've found a vehicle that fits the bill, you'll want to know one thing: is it honest? Equifax's HPI site (***www.hpicheck.com***) will, for £12.50, conduct a basic online E-Check on a shortlist of three vehicles to confirm date of first registration, vehicle identity and whether any of them show up on HPI's registers. You can then opt to pay a further £15 for a more detailed HPICheck on an individual vehicle. For the latter, What Car? offers a History Check for £29.50, and the AA and RAC each have their own variations on the theme. Visit ***www.theaa.co.uk/motoringandtravel*** and ***www.rac.co.uk/services***, where you can also arrange to have a comprehensive mechanical inspection.

Next step, insurance. The slickest online service comes from Ironsure (***www.ironsure.com***), but for a range of competitive quotations try ***www.screentrade.co.uk*** or ***www.moneyextra.com*** – both serve up offerings from eight major underwriters, including Royal Sun Alliance, Norwich Union, Zurich and Legal & General. Other good sites include Norwich Union (***www.norwich-union.co.uk***), which offers direct online sales at a 10 percent discount, and Direct Line (***www.directline.co.uk***), who also conduct the whole process online. Other direct sellers let you fill in a form on their Web site, but complete the transaction by phone.

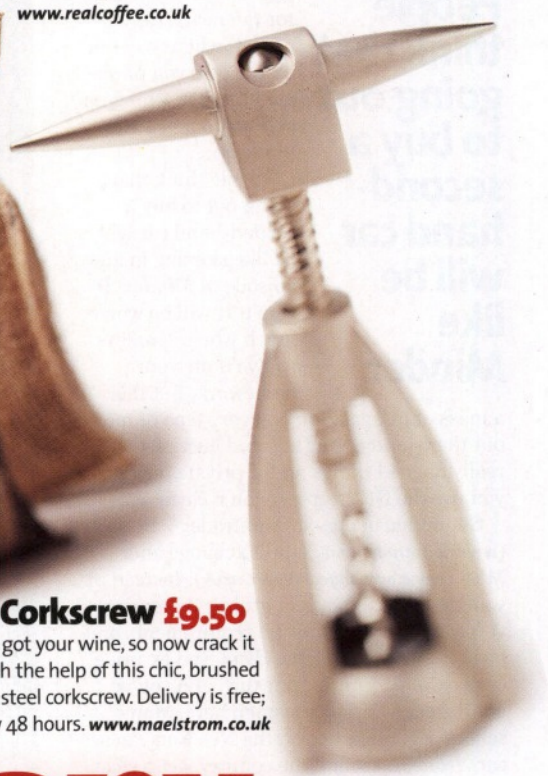
And finally, at ***www.carquote.co.uk*** you can request quotes from a whole spectrum of companies in one shot – although unfortunately you'll have to wait for separate email or postal responses from each of them.

Ministry CD £10.99

Just because we're in a new millennium, it doesn't mean we can't wallow in nostalgia for the last one – so keep this CD on hand for some of the best house and trance music of the 90s. *The Annual: Millennium Edition* from the Ministry of Sound could be yours for £10.99 plus £2.50 p&p. ***www.ministryofsound.com***

Coffee £25

Start the new year – nay, new millennium – as you left the old one: kept upright by regular injections of caffeine. But this century, why not treat yourself to some top-notch java. Real Coffee offers an impressive range, either ground or in beans. Our gift pack of six half-pound bags arrived the next day (price includes p&p). ***www.realcoffee.co.uk***

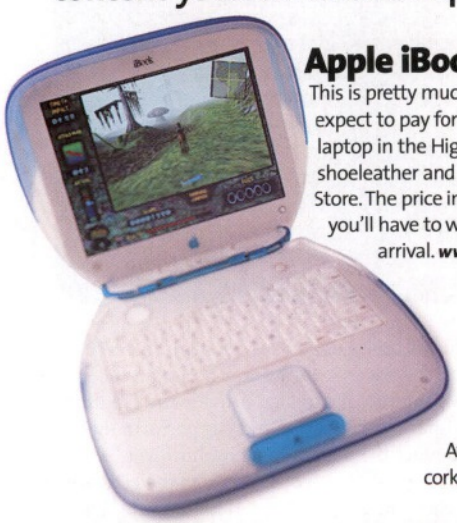


Corkscrew £9.50

You've got your wine, so now crack it open with the help of this chic, brushed stainless steel corkscrew. Delivery is free; allow 48 hours. ***www.maelstrom.co.uk***

Retail therapy

No cuddly toy in our trolley this month, you'll just have to content yourself with an Apple iBook



Apple iBook £1249

This is pretty much what you'd expect to pay for Apple's cutesy laptop in the High Street, so save some shoeleather and buy direct from the Apple Store. The price includes VAT and delivery, but you'll have to wait for up to 17 days for its arrival. ***www.apple.com***

Pressure caps £6.50

In the unlikely event of failure to finish a bottle of vino, these cute little ghost pressure cap bottle-tops will keep it fresh. Available from the same site as the corkscrew. Delivery is free; allow 48 hours. ***www.maelstrom.co.uk***

THE NET'S TOP TIPS FOR ONLINE SHOPPING

Keep to our simple guidelines, and there's no reason why online shopping should end in a puddle of tears

■ **CHECK THE SITE IS SECURE** A small padlock will appear in the bottom left of your browser to show that you can safely send credit card details through the site. Your Web browser will also tell you whether a site is secure or not when you enter it.

■ **SHOP WITH BRAND-NAME COMPANIES** As with any shopping, you're better off with a company you've actually heard of.

■ **CHECK DELIVERY TIMES AND CHARGES** Companies should tell you the delivery charge if there is one on their site. If you live in the Highlands and Islands or Ireland, you may find that free delivery does not apply.

■ **NEVER SEND ANYTHING BY EMAIL** If a site asks for card details by email, don't oblige. It's far, far easier for emails to be intercepted.

■ **PRINT THE CONTRACT** This is the only permanent record of your purchase, so make sure you keep it, along with your order number and other details. Don't forget: if it's a UK site, you have the same consumer rights as you do in the High Street.

■ **IF IT GOES WRONG, DON'T WORRY** Contrary to scare stories, online shopping is safer and very often cheaper than traditional methods – and it's in the online store's interest to sort any problems out quickly.

PHOTOGRAPHY: NICK WRIGHT

60s flask $20

This fine and funky US site has both mid-century and contemporary collectables – of the kitsch and non-kitsch varieties; check out pieces by Arne Jacobsen and Tom Haas, among others. This vintage flask arrived within a week; p&p varies. ***www.dish-shop.com***

Organic soup £3.25

Everything an organic aficionado could dream of. Delivery is quick, and free if vegetables are ordered. We also bought crisps, but scoffed them before photography. Sorry.
www.organicsdirect.com

Telescope £129

Do a spot of star-gazing (instead of the navel variety) with one of these *über* telescopes. The range here should satisfy all aspiring Patrick Moores. Delivery within seven days; £15 p&p.
www.sherwoods-photo.com

Sports shirts £37.99

In a bid to remain impartial, we bought a 'selection' of shirts from Kitbag. The above price applies to a current promotion for home strips, but can vary. If in stock, your order is sent out that day (p&p is free); otherwise allow 28 days. ***www.kitbag.com***

Wines from £17

Get educated in fine wines at this cracking site. Expert advice, tasting notes... it will even suggest an accompaniment for beans on toast. We ordered these impressive 1.5l bottles of Chateau L'Ermitage and Chateau Pesquie at £17 and £21 a pop. Delivered, securely packed, within seven days, at around a fiver p&p. ***www.chateaunet.com***

SEE HOW THEY LOOK THEN READ HOW THEY

DRIVE

New Clio
"Nothing less than perfection would suffice after the brilliant Clio Williams. The Sport Clio succeeds completely"

New BMW X5
"The ultimate suburban off-roader. Redefines the class standard for on-road performance and handling"

New Porsche GT3
"Beyond 6100rpm it sounds better than any current Ferrari. The GT3 is the car all 911 nuts have been waiting for. It's fantastic"

New Fiesta 1.6
"Still the best handling car in its class, the Fiesta gets a new face and a range-topping 1.6-litre engine"

AUTOCAR First for new cars every week

what website?

February 2000

YOUR MONTHLY GUIDE TO THE TOUGHEST, TASTIEST SITES ON THE NET

CONTENDERS – ARE YOU READY?

SHOW ME THE SITES...

What Website?

FEBRUARY

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

Providing your PC hasn't been fried to a crisp by the Millennium meltdown, you'll be wanting new ways to spend your time online in the New Year. What Website? is full of good stuff – and you won't need to tire out your fingers typing URLs either. Just see our Web site (below)

www.whatwebsite.com

EVERY LINK ON ONE GREAT SITE!

Eager to see the sites featured in this month's listings, but tired of typing endless Web addresses? Well, just tap in ***www.whatwebsite.com*** and you'll find a link to every site. But you will need a password to enter, and this month it's...

WHEELS

THE FREE SOFTWARE STARTER PACK

THE ULTIMATE HELP BUTTON ***www.thenetmag.co.uk/helpbutton*** Our online guide has all the essential free software reviewed and rated with links

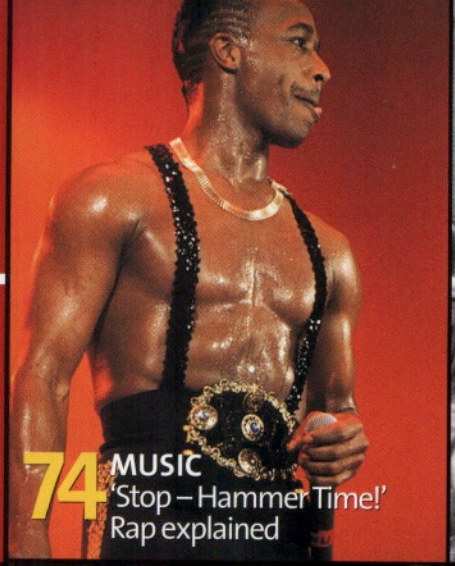
PLAYING MULTIMEDIA BROWSER WATCH
browserwatch.internet.com/plug-in.html
A comprehensive list of browser plug-ins.

REALPLAYER G2
www.real.com
Cross-platform free software for streaming movie (RealVideo) and audio (RealAudio) files across the Internet.

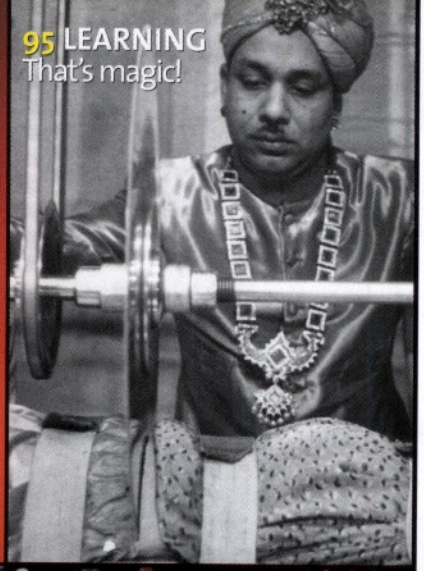
QUICKTIME 4.0
www.apple.com/quicktime
Version 4 of this multi-media software will play just about anything, including MP3 files.

MICROSOFT MEDIAPLAYER
www.microsoft.com/mediaplayer
Plays streaming audio and video files saved in the MediaPlayer format.

SHOCKWAVE & FLASH
www.shockwave.com
A must-have if you want to enjoy sound, great animation effects and even natty games on Web sites.



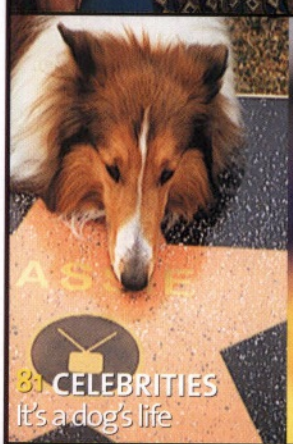
74 MUSIC
'Stop – Hammer Time!' Rap explained



95 LEARNING
That's magic!

93 FOOD
Could you fill Jennifer's shoes?

72 MUSIC
Alanis' new lp. Sorry



81 CELEBRITIES
It's a dog's life

99 KIDS
They're cute, they're yellow – welcome to Pokie's world

69 TV
US comedy

105 SCIENCE
Seeing stars

PICTURES: KOBAL COLLECTION, RETNA, SYGMA

THE LISTINGS

FEBRUARY 2000

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Spike Lee does horror; Sharon Stone delivers a shocker

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Yanks in 'sense of humour' shock

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Rejoice: Guns N' Roses are back!

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As Hammer said, U Can't Touch This

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Every bit of sporting gear you'll ever need – all bought on the Web

SPORT AMERICAN FOOTBALL 79
It's just rugby with helmets, isn't it?

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Four-legged stars and their Web sites

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High Street names on the Net

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If you're tired of waiting at the surgery, why not try an alternative?

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The best of the recipe databases

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Yes, you could be the new Paul Daniels

KIDS 99
What on earth is a Pokemon?

GAMES 101
Fragging? Mods? They can only be talking about Quake

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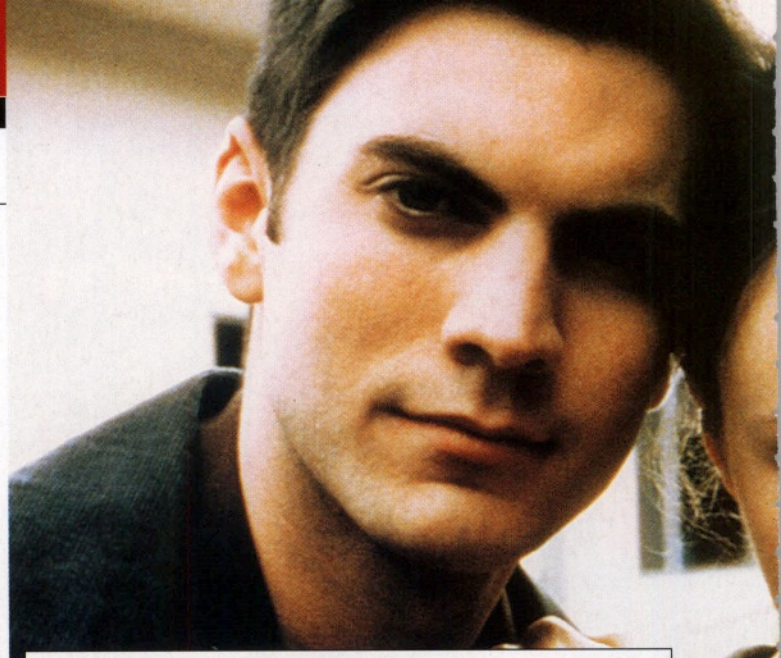
See the stars with a Web telescope

WEIRD 106
'How did you get that pencil point so sharp?': the Web's craziest collectors

NEED TO KNOW 108
End your Internet confusion with our comprehensive guide to essential sites

Beauty and the beasts

MOVIE RELEASES Marshall Julius laps up the latest from Spacey, Lee and Scorsese. Er, and *Simpatico*...



American Beauty

Kevin Spacey, Annette Bening, Thora Birch ★★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

Films directed by famous theatre types are often drawn-out, stagy affairs, obsessed with talk and oblivious to entertainment value. Fortunately, this is not the case with *American Beauty*, a gloriously twisted slice of life from theatrical wunderkind Sam Mendes. Scratching the surface of the American dream, Mendes exposes the misery, fear and confusion that governs his characters' lives, presenting their dreams and failures for our amusement. Set deep in Suburbia, piled high with broken relationships and teenage weirdness, this is an amusing, intelligent, unexpected gift.

www.americanbeauty-thefilm.com

Useful site, but extremely boring and uninspiring to look at.

Angela's Ashes

Emily Watson, Robert Carlyle

★★★★

Alan Parker shows us what it means to be poor in this engrossing, episodic journey through the young life of author Frank McCourt. Set in 1930s and 40s Ireland, *Angela's Ashes* exposes the misery of a strict Catholic childhood as we follow the misadventures of the McCourts as they live in filth, sleep with fleas, go hungry and shoeless and die at the drop of a hat. Sensitively made, well observed and not nearly as depressing as it sounds.

www.angelasashes.com

Not fully completed yet, but so far it's looking pretty fine.

Bringing Out the Dead

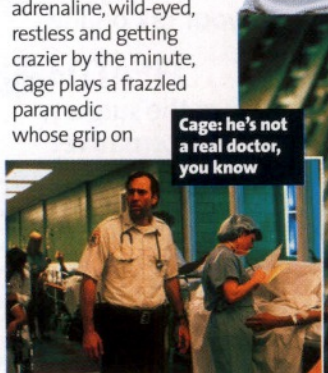
Nicolas Cage, Patricia Arquette, John Goodman

★★★★

Physically, spiritually and mentally burnt out, running on booze and adrenaline, wild-eyed, restless and getting crazier by the minute, Cage plays a frazzled paramedic whose grip on reality is tenuous at best. Martin Scorsese returns to New York after dark with *Taxi Driver* screenwriter Paul Schrader, offering a similarly warped tale of screwy people and nightmare situations, laced with gallows humour and the possibility of redemption in the form of recovering junkie Patricia Arquette. This is top quality stuff, edgy as hell and featuring a supremely wired performance from Cage.

www.bringingoutthedead.com

A suitably scary and beautifully designed site which complements the film perfectly.



Cage: he's not a real doctor, you know

Double Jeopardy

Ashley Judd, Tommy Lee Jones, Bruce Greenwood ★★

A feeble-minded revenge thriller riddled with holes, bombarded by clichés, and finished by a particularly silly screenplay. Wrongly imprisoned for murdering her other half (Greenwood), Judd discovers that he is in fact alive and well, having faked his own death for the insurance money. Once released, she sets out to find him, since having already served time for his murder she is now perfectly entitled to hunt him down and kill him. Pursued by grizzled parole officer Tommy Lee Jones, Judd runs, hides, swims and shoots, the results being patchy at best.

www.doublejeopardymovie.com

Stylish, pacy and good-looking: everything the film isn't.

Double Jeopardy: no fun at all

End of the Affair

Ralph Fiennes, Julianne Moore, Stephen Rea

★★

In Graham Greene's classic tale of jealousy, betrayal and doomed love, Fiennes embarks on an affair with Moore, wife of Rea. Although they all behave badly from time to time, they're much too stuffy (in that 1940s way) to care about. Although good looking, the film is ultimately slow, and not exactly a bundle of laughs.

www.tidalwave.net/~mkirk/wwwroot/index.htm

A Ralph Fiennes site with all the latest news and info on the Brit actor.

Sleepy Hollow: a bit wooden, say the critics

Simpatico

Nick Nolte, Jeff Bridges, Sharon Stone ★

Starting at a snail's pace and slowing down from there, this is one of the most tedious, life-draining films ever made. But then, what else could we expect from a film based on a Sam Shepard play? Alternately obvious and obscure, this is a tale of overdue repercussions arising from small-time fraud and blackmail which happened many years before, and the fallout years later. Pointless, pretentious and hateful.

www.serve.com/sharon/sharon.htm

Pictures, a biography and news about Sharon Stone.

Sleepy Hollow

Johnny Depp, Christina Ricci, Miranda Richardson ★★★

From Tim Burton, the king of stylised cinema, comes a typically striking adventure, ingeniously designed and atmospherically shot...but something's not quite right. Inspired by Washington Irving's classic tale *The Legend of*

WHAT THE SITES ARE SAYING

	aint-it-cool-news.com	cinematter.com	eonline.com	film.com	moviereviews.org	salon.com
American Beauty	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👎
Bringing Out The Dead	👍	👎	👎	👎	👍	👎
Double Jeopardy	👎	👎	👎	👎	👎	👎
Sleepy Hollow	👍	👎	👍	👎	👍	👍
Stigmata	👎	👎	👎	👎	👎	👎

PICTURES: MOVIESTORE COLLECTION

The students got their money's worth at the photo booth

Summer of Sam

John Leguizamo, Adrian Brody, Mira Sorvino ★★★★★

Spike Lee delivers a gripping, sometimes shocking and surprisingly funny tale of sex, serial killers, drugs and disco. Welcome to the summer of '77. The self-proclaimed monster Son of Sam is doing his business all over the Bronx, and it's against this tense backdrop that Lee delivers a story closer to *Boogie Nights* than *Silence of the Lambs*. Freakishly authentic and fabulously entertaining.

movies.go.com/summerofsam/

The official site: badly let down by the miniscule size of the text.

Wonderland: sex, drugs and pregnancy

Wonderland

Gina McKee, Shirley Henderson, Molly Parker ★★★★

Shot entirely in London, this drama about three sisters offers grainy views of the city from Soho to the South Bank. Enjoy the sights, the sex and the dysfunctional parenting.

www.britmovie.co.uk

This excellent site has all the latest Brit-flick news.

CLASSIC MOVIE

YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN

Wilder: used to be funny

Gene Wilder, Peter Boyle, Marty Feldman (1974)

The smartest, funniest and most inventive spoof to emerge from the brain of Mel Brooks, thanks largely to co-conspirator Wilder, who takes the lead as the son of the maddest doctor of 'em all in search of Abby Normal brains. Perfectly cast with numerous Brooks regulars and side-splittingly funny, the film races from one classic routine to the next.

www.geocities.com/Hollywood/Studio/1382/Frank.html

Fantastically detailed tribute. Altogether now: 'It's alive...it's alive!'

Sleepy Hollow, Burton sweeps us 200 years back to the gothic town of Sleepy Hollow, where lawman Ichabod Crane (Depp) seeks the fearsome Headless Horseman. But the movie fails to grip, and despite

Someone call Nicolas Cage

decent action sequences and plenty of gore, it lacks depth and spirit.

www.sleepyhollowmovie.com

A typically Tim Burton-style Web site, with heaps of atmosphere.

Stigmata

Patricia Arquette, Gabriel Byrne, Jonathan Pryce ★

Much like the recent remake of *The Haunting*, *Stigmata* is a glossy flop: silly, misguided and not worth your time. Patricia Arquette is a cute little atheist who can't stop bleeding. She bleeds from her hands. She bleeds from her feet. This crackpot horror is as scary, and just about as welcome, as a nosebleed.

www.mgm.com/stigmata/

This tries to emulate Blair Witch, *but fails. Frighteningly un-scary.*

Entertain us!

VIDEO RELEASES Another intriguing range of options for a cosy winter night in

THE WAR ZONE

Ray Winstone, Tilda Swinton

Tim Roth decided to turn his hand to directing last year, and the result was a dark and brutal drama. Set in Devon, this tale of incest – although technically impressive – proves a needlessly gruelling and harrowing experience. Real life is depressing enough, Tim – you don't have to add to the misery.

www.geocities.com/Hollywood/Lot/3753/TimIndex.html

OFFICE SPACE

Ron Livingstone, Stephen Root, Jennifer Aniston

Live-action, office-set comedy from writer/director Mike Judge, creator of Beavis, Butthead and Hank Hill. Stressed out from work, Livingstone tries to get himself fired, with predictably wacky and witty results.

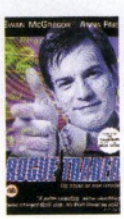
www.officeguy.com

WING COMMANDER

Freddie Prinz Jr, Matthew Lillard, Saffron Burrows

An ambitious but low-grade *Starship Troopers* wannabe based on a videogame, and that's usually a bad sign. Directed by game creator Chris Roberts, it's a cheap and cheerful adventure ideal for the small screen.

www.wcmovie.com



ROGUE TRADER

Ewan McGregor, Anna Friel

A standard drama with a tabloid mentality and zero chemistry between the leads, writer/director James Deardon's big screen TV movie sees McGregor sinking Barings as dodgy banker Nick Leeson. Not very interesting.

members.dencity.com/starburst/obiwan

A SIMPLE PLAN

Bill Paxton, Billy Bob Thornton, Brent Briscoe

Money is the root of all evil in Sam Raimi's predictably offbeat morality play. A trio of hicks discover a big bag of cash in a snowy Fargoesque environment. Paranoia sets in, the scheming begins, and the body count rises. Not quite as smart as it thinks it is.

www.asimpleplan.com

AUSTIN POWERS 2: THE SPY WHO SHAGGED ME

Mike Myers, Heather Graham

The shagadelic groovy one returns in this lifeless, by-the-numbers sequel, a shameless studio money-maker which rips off the original movie and many more besides. Although there's the occasional flash of wit, for the most part it's hopelessly laboured. The mojo has gone, baby.

www.austinpowers.com

Hollywood's hall of fame

BLOCKBUSTERS You've seen the films – now enjoy their Web sites. We pick ten of the greatest...

ET the Extra-Terrestrial

www.azstarnet.com/~newmann/et/

★★★

The ugly but cuddly alien with the glowing finger has had a high profile for a short dude recently, due to his many TV advertising endorsements (in the States he's been linked up with an insurance firm). Given the film's tendency toward the saccharine, the site is relatively straightforward and palatable but covers the bases you'd expect. Plenty of bikes flying past full moons, then.

Gone With The Wind

www.franklymydear.com/ ★★★★

Whether you regard GWTW as a critical landmark or a four-hour, bum-numbing chore, you can't deny its importance and success. It may be an old film, but this is a cutting-edge site with IPIX tours of Margaret Mitchell's (the author) house and interactive videos about the Deep South of the time. There's also some entertaining alternate versions of the movie as it might have been filmed by Tarantino, David Lynch and Aaron Spelling. The mind boggles...

Chris Boardman denied the steroid claims

Gwarv's Pulp Fiction Page

gwarv.pvv.org/pulp/main.htm

★★★★

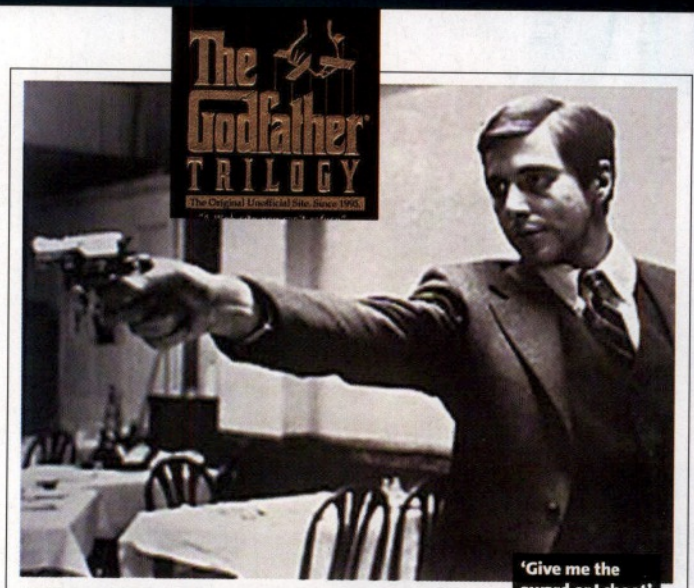
Like the film it studies, Gwarv's page is intricately detailed, self-referential and ultimately rewarding. Besides the requisite pics, sounds, movies and dialogue excerpts, there are discussions on the glowing contents of the briefcase, a long essay from noted critic Roger Ebert on the finer elements of the film and a 'Tarantinoverse' feature collating common threads in Quentin T's films.

Jaws – the Home Page

www.winternet.com/~tandjo4/jaws/index.html ★★★★

Expansively detailed look at Steven Spielberg's breakthrough thriller which gave great credence to sharks' reputation as v. scary ocean dwellers, but did little for the sales of trunks and dinghies. Like all the best beaches, the site's pleasantly laid-out with plenty of things to do (from extensive RealAudio and video clips of omitted scenes to plenty of articles), but the view is spoiled somewhat for Mac users due to the use of a tiny and unreadable font.

'Jump!'



'Give me the award or I shoot'

The Godfather Trilogy

www.jgeoff.com/godfathr.html ★★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

Impressively full and fulsome tribute to the epic gangster trilogy, and we're not just saying that to avoid sleeping with the fishes. With over 100 pages it contains trivia and info galore, not just on the three award-winning and genre-defining films but on all writer Mario Puzo's books. Plus, sauce recipes, updates on the weather in Palermo and why it's a bad idea to eat an orange. It's an offer you can't refuse.

Psycho

users.netreach.net/treyl/psycho.htm

★★★

Heavy on text, this homage to Hitchcock's legendary chiller explains all about the genre-definer and yes, there are several stills from the shower scene. The 45-second scene has 50 different camera shots, proving Hitchcock was as handy with an editor's blade as the assailant was with a knife.

best movies sites ★★★★★ where can I...

GET LATEST NEWS AND RELEASE DATES?

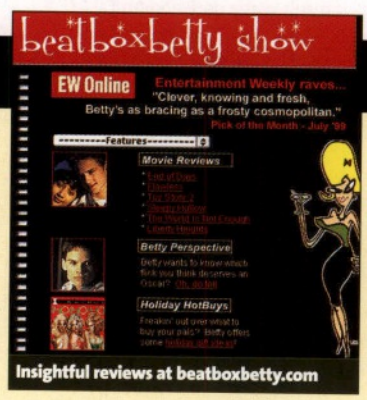
www.popcorn.co.uk
British perspective on new releases.
aint-it-cool-news.com
Gives the inside track on new films.
filmunlimited.co.uk
The Guardian's latest big-screen behemoth comes alive.
uk.imdb.com
The bible of online film.

DECIDE WHAT TO SEE?

www.salon.com/ent/movies
The most cerebral, well-written reviews on the Web.
www.filmreview.co.uk
At last, Britain can boast a reviews site to rival the Americans.
www.beatboxbetty.com
Innovative attempt at spicing up film reviews by introducing a 'character.'
www.mrcranky.com
The amusing protagonist casts his critical eye over the latest releases.

FIND OFFICIAL FILM SITES?

www.filmfour.com
Details of the TV channel, and the latest films C4 have in production.
www.foxmovies.com
Links to all 20th Century Fox releases.
www.movies.warnerbros.com
WB's new films and lost classics.
www.universalstudios.com/universal_pictures/
Currently previewing the new Schwarzenegger effort.



Insightful reviews at beatboxbetty.com

SEARCH FOR OBSCURE FILMS AND SCRIPTS?

www.script-o-rama.com
Read rejected scripts for well-known films and transcripts of obscure ones.
www.ohthehumanity.com
The worst movies of all time, lovingly detailed.
www.badmovies.org
The best (worst?) B movies ever.
www.losman.com/fod.htm
Dedicated to cinematic deaths. Nice.

FIND A CINEMA?

www.ticketlinks.co.uk
Excellent portal for film screenings.
www.virgin.net/cinema/index.html
Enter a name to get locations and pithy reviews.
www.odeon.co.uk
Book online, or peruse the latest flicks.
cinema.scoot.co.uk
From the people behind the directory.

BUY OR RENT VIDEOS?

www.reel.com
DVDs and videos on the cheap.

WORDS: GARY PARKINSON; PICTURES: REX, KOBAL COLLECTION, SYGMA

Flipper suddenly turned on Sandy

Star Wars

www.starwars.com ★★★★

Diehard *Star Wars* fans' curiosity is rarely satisfied with any site that relates to the films (sorry, we mean religion), but this official site gives it a go. Just about everything you could ask about any of the four films released so far is answered, with detailed breakdowns of the characters, scenarios, plotlines, technology and, of course, those

Huts: bulky

trailers that caused widespread office disruption last year.

Titanic

www.titanicmovie.com/menu.html

★★★★

The Biggest Movie Ever™ took painstaking preparation to the limit – remember the early sniggers about it being way over budget? The official site mirrors this attention to detail. Like the doomed boat, it's well furnished: VRML takes you round the wreck, storyboards scroll past for your delectation, and there are dozens of stills of dreamboats Leo and Kate. Best of all, it doesn't take hours to sit through.

Underman's 2001

www.underview.com/2001.html

★★★★

A serious film worthy of serious debate, Stanley Kubrick's astonishing rendering of Arthur C Clarke's sci-fi monolith tends to inspire more wordy discussion than other films in the genre, and this is reflected in Underman's site. The author claims the word count, including essays, adds up to novel length. A touch po-faced at times, but you can't claim it doesn't cover the ground.

Vincent's Casablanca homepage

users.aol.com/VRV1/index.html

★★★★

If black and white movies, war stories or classic romances aren't your thing, you might still be won over by the enduring story of Bogey and Bergy in the war-torn titular town. This fan site does a decent job, with informative snippets in addition to the usual features – although we could maybe have done without photos of cast members' graves.

www.blackstar.co.uk
Discounts, DVDs and charts.
www.filmsite.org/greatlists.html
The mother of all film lists.
www.blockbuster.co.uk
The site of the shop.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

rec.arts.movies.past-films
Discuss all-time classic movies.

JOIN A MAILING LIST?

Send an email with 'subscribe' in the body to ***Majordomo@logrus.org*** to discuss the *Star Wars* films.

GET CHATTING?

www.back-to-titanic.com
All the Titanic talk you can handle.

THE BLOCKBUSTER DEBATE

Critical condition

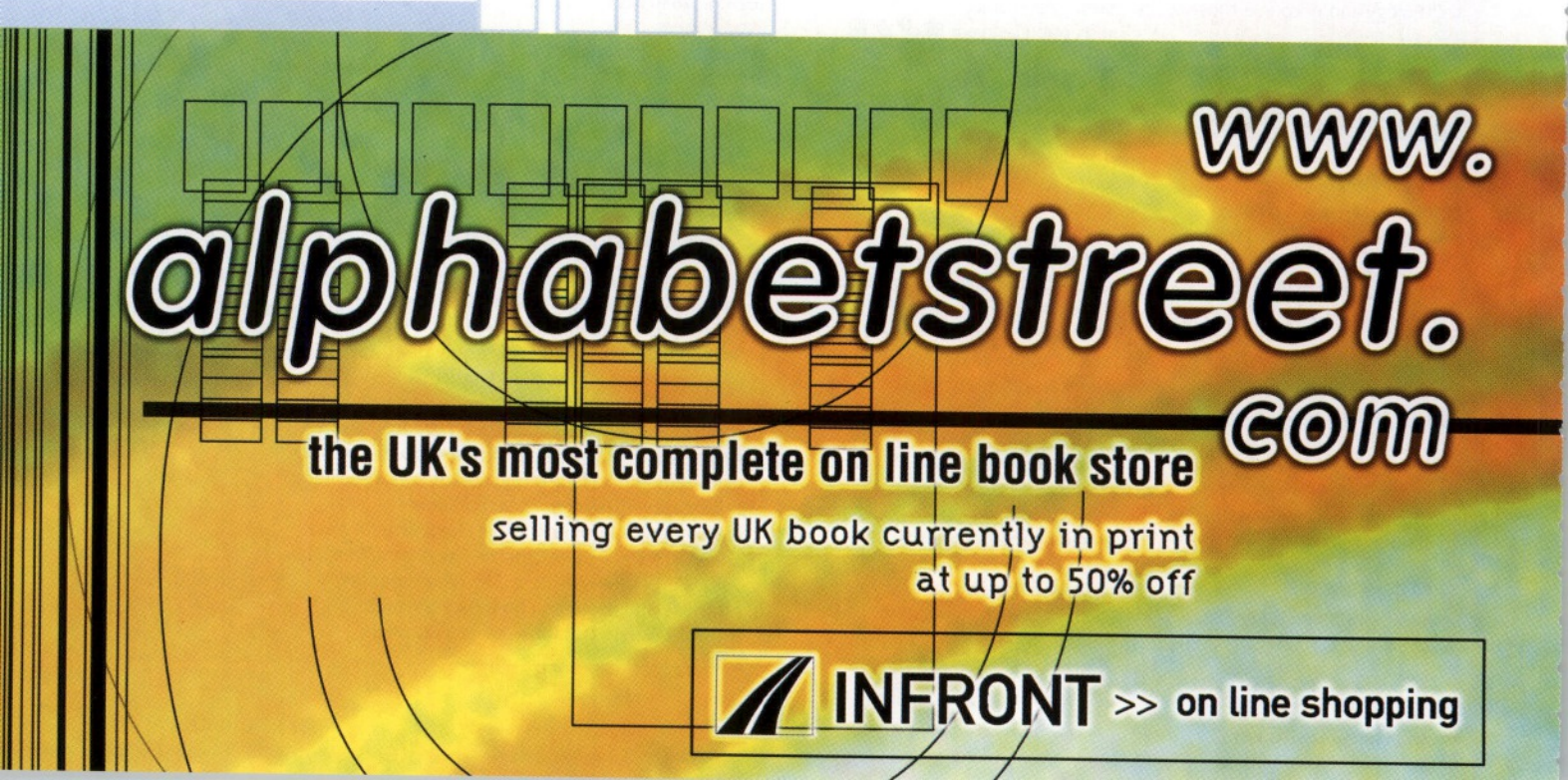
Japanese movies: long

For every crowdpleasing blockbuster, there's a ballbreaker which the critics implore us to sit through because it's 'important' – the cinematic equivalent of a reading list from your English teacher. The same films always crop up on Top 100 lists – movies such as Orson Welles' *Citizen Kane* follow-up *The Magnificent Ambersons*, the groundbreaking (ie grainy) *Metropolis*, the silent but deadly *Battleship Potemkin*, and interminable Japanese flicks like *Shichinin no Samurai* – the inspiration for *The Magnificent Seven*. If you're writing a Film Studies essay, all these and more can be found through the Internet Movie Database at *uk.imdb.com*.

www.
dvdstreet.
com

the UK's greatest on line DVD store

selling every region 2 DVD at up to 50% off
free delivery in the UK



'Now will you sleep with me?'

All About TV Friends

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

www.geocities.com/TelevisionCity/4151/index.html ★★★★★

Fans of (probably) the most popular American show of the 90s should navigate this excellent site carefully, as it may give details of episodes not yet seen here. But be daring and take the risk, as it's jam-packed with info about the six-some. Most fun is the Phoebe-inspired songbook; the *What Happened To Grandma?* lyrics include 'Your mum and dad said she moved to Peru, but the truth is she died, and someday you will too.'

Cotton's Movies for video and audio. There's also a shop but, laments Hank, 'It doesn't sell propane or propane accessories'.

The Original Cheers Web site

s9000.furman.edu/~treu/cheers.html ★★★

'Sometimes you want to go where everybody knows your name' warbles the theme tune to *Cheers*, the wildly successful show that ran between 1982-93. Reminisce here: the site's a little sparse,

Cheers: timeless

Prescott – The Series won few fans

but we'll forgive them because the series was so good. Download the theme tune, do the trivia quiz then check out the guest book – especially if you can help Derek from Utah (favourite episode: 'all') who was 'out of the country for the last episode', and would therefore *love* to get hold of a video of it.

M*A*S*H: Best Care Anywhere

www.geocities.com/ TelevisionCity/5576/ ★★★★

Remember Hotlips as she was then and see how she's looking today via

WORDS: SUE WEEKES/SARAH WAKELY; PICTURES: SCOPE

Thirty-minute heroes

AMERICAN SITCOMS Everyone knows our American cousins do TV comedy better than we do – and the evidence is there for all to see on the Internet

Bewitched

www.bewitched.net/index.htm ★★★★

Bewitched: er... timeless

Who'd have thought a black and white story about a white witch and her husband made in the 1960s would be syndicated across the globe over 30 years on? This hefty site doesn't exactly load in the twitch of a nose, but it will sate the staunchest of Samantha fans with audio, video, chat, show secrets and the chance to see the opening credits in Japanese. In fact, you can have the entire site in French, German, Spanish, Italian and Portuguese – if you really feel the need.

Frasier

www.personal.umich.edu/~fwu/frasier/frasier.html ★★★

When your raw material's as sublime as this, you don't need an all-singing Web site – which is just as well, since the current crop of *Frasier* sites do little more than offer cast bios and episode guides. This is about the best, even though Cafe Nervosa clearly missed its June 99 construction deadline. While sipping your double latte, content yourself with the Frasier Drinking Game and marvel at the myth that is Maris, best summed up by Niles: 'It's as if you could take a great French cathedral, a painting by El Greco, and the upper third of Norway and transform them into one tiny woman with ferret eyes and disturbing hair.'

King Of The Hill

www.fox.com/kingofthehill/ ★★★★

Head straight for Dale's Dossier for an enjoyable refresher course on Arlen's idiosyncratic inhabitants, complete with their memorable lines: 'Nobody likes a know-it-all who sits around talking about their genitalia.' True, Hank. Paranoiac Dale has also made sure that our propane-selling hero's 'embarrassing imperfection' of a narrow urethra is well documented. Make your way to

Even during surgery, Hotlips thought only of Jerry

a link to the Miss Wyoming Scholarship site. Hard to believe that Loretta Swit was the Pamela Anderson of her day. This site covers every facet of the cult show, with plenty of 'did you knows?'; for instance, did you know that Cpl Klinger (Jamie Farr) was the only cast member to have actually served in the Korean War?

Seinfeld.com

www.seinfeld.com ★★★★

Despite the best efforts of BBC2's schedulers, the peerless US sitcom is gaining a following in this country. At the impressive official site, fans can download *Seinfeld* wallpaper, view video clips, and make the Soup Nazi say 'Adios, Muchacho' as many times as they like. If you're not a fan, of course, you'll have no idea what we're talking about.

Sergeant Bilko Episode Guide

www.bilko.co.uk ★★★

Prefer lots of pictures on Web sites? Well, this is not for you. It's text-based, and takes a few clicks to get to the info – even basic questions like 'How many episodes of *The Phil Silvers Show* were made?' (142) are a little tricky to find answers for.

Simpsons – 742 Evergreen Terrace

www.toolboxdesign.com/simpsons/ ★★★★

There are heaps of great sites dedicated solely to the dysfunctional Springfield family, many which are more in-depth than the official effort. This is one, with a load of odd-ball information and piccies of all the characters, including their transformations from birth – and they've changed a lot. Although Bart is often cited as the main man, Homer is the one who often comes up with the gems, many of which are listed here; 'Honey, I didn't get drunk, I just went into a strange fantasy world' is but one. We couldn't have said it any better.

TV DINNERS

Why-de-why?

We Brits are very precious about our sitcoms, yet a quick trawl of the Web reveals all too many that were – quite frankly – bloody awful. Remember, for example, *Hi-de-Hi* and the 'hilarious' antics that held audiences spellbound? Daniel

Couldridge does, at *members.tripod.com/~dcould/croftcoms/*. Then cast your mind back to *Man About the House* by harrying your mouse to *www.geocities.com/Hollywood/5144/man-about.html*, or the unofficial *Waiting for God* site (*www.flash.net/~ehcalk/wfg/wfg-main.htm*). Perhaps you should watch TV instead – just make sure that *Babes in the Wood* (*www.babesinthewood.co.uk*) isn't on...

best TV sites ★★★★★

where can I...

FIND PROGRAMME GUIDES FOR POPULAR SHOWS?

www.fox.com/allymcbeal/

Fans of the skinny attorney should head here. Everyone else – stay clear.

www.episodeguides.com/sttos

Everything you'll *ever* want to know about Captain Kirk and chums.

www.snpp.com/episodeguide.html

A guide to every *Simpsons* episode, with great downloads and detail.

www.beef-cake.com

At-a-glance guide to *South Park*, with pictures of favourite moments.

LOOK UP MY FAVOURITE TV PERSONALITY?

www.geocities.com/Hollywood/Lot/8198/actress.htm

If you have a favourite TV actress, go to the TV Actress Directory.

www.pathfinder.com/people/web/index.html

People Magazine's speciality is B-list celebs: find your favourite here.

www.nyt.co.uk/celebrit.htm

Need a famous person? Go here to book a Brit celebrity – eg Eddie 'the Eagle' Edwards – for your event.

www.jerryspringer.com

Everyone's favourite talk-show host has a surprisingly uncontentious Web presence. 'My Wife is Sleeping with My Aunt', indeed.

BUY TV MEMORABILIA?

www.tvtoys.com

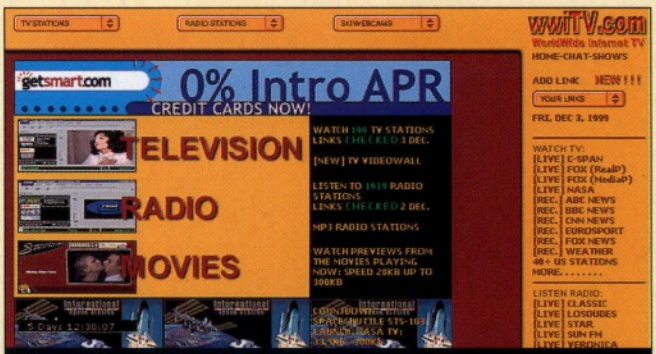
Pick up TV toys, books – the lot. Most should find a favourite here; quite possibly heaven.

www.universal-studios.net/movieprops.html

Log in and head for the shop – a Jean-Luc Picard doll for a mere $35?

www.comedycentral.com/store/

Tells you where to pick up your favourite *South Park* toys direct from the States.



Watch telly from just about anywhere in the world with www.livetv.wwitv.com

www.ctvb.com

Mail order memorabilia including classic books, guides and mags.

FIND TV LISTINGS?

www.toaster.co.uk

Well-presented electronic programme guide – also lets you search for shows by genre.

www.freeserve.co.uk/tvnradio/

A quick and complete guide, plus a handy instant soap update for addicts.

ptv.ucd.ie/ptv

Register with On the Box to use its personalised listings facility.

www.digiguide.co.uk

Customised guide to British telly, with schedules and reviews.

FIND TV NEWS AND INFO?

tv.cream.org

One of the best resources on the Net for long-dead shows.

www.bigglethwaite.com

Everything you could ever possibly need to know about British TV online.

www.ultimatetv.com

American-influenced site with links to current shows, gossip and info. Great 'Ask Mr TV' facility.

WATCH TV?

www.virtuetv.co.uk

Live events, documentaries and an archive of classic films.

www.beeb.com

Watch news or programme snippets in RealVideo.

www.broadcast.com

If it's happening live, it'll be listed somewhere in Broadcast.

www.livetv.wwitv.com

Connects you to more than 100 live TV stations from over 40 countries.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

alt.tv.simpsons

The best place to discuss the antics of Homer, Marge and co.

JOIN A MAILING LIST?

Want to find out about writing TV shows? Mail ***majordomo@spies.com*** with info episodic-1 in the message.

GET CHATTING?

www.frasier.mcmail.com

The best UK source for *Frasier* chat and info.

Looking for more television sites? Turn to Need To Know on page 108

Love books?
buy on line at bol.com

Party like it's 2000

NEW RELEASES John Mullen picks some tunes to cure your New Year hangover

Slash's bakery attracted few punters

Guns N' Roses

Live Era '87-93 **GEFFEN** ★★★

Everyone knows that Axl Rose is an anagram of Bill Clinton's fave pastime, but what people forget is just how good a rock 'n' roll band Guns N' Roses were, away from the dodgy politics of their lead singer. This is the kind of blistering metal most British bands could only dream of making, from the snarling *It's So Easy* to the gorgeous riffing of *Paradise City*. The wife-beating anthem *Used To Love Her (But I Had To Kill Her)* is still gruesome, though. ***w1.857.telia.com/~u85703051/gnr/index.html*** As the author himself explains, 'lots of pictures of Axl Rose naked and grabbing his crotch'. Nice.

Jean-Michel Jarre

Metamorphoses **SONY** ★★

A pretentious album title (well, this is a man who spent the millennium conducting a three-act electronic opera at the Pyramids), this is the kind of overblown prog-rock that was all the rage before punk came along. The only diverting thing here is the strange choice of guest artists – Transglobal Underground's Natasha Atlas, Laurie Anderson and Sharon Corr. Let's hope his missus, Charlotte Rampling, is understanding... ***www.jeanmicheljarre.com*** Although a beautifully-presented site, with lyrics like 'I'm looking for my dreams/Smoking some golden beams', that's not quite enough.

Jarre: techno's most punchable

Metallica: tough

Metallica

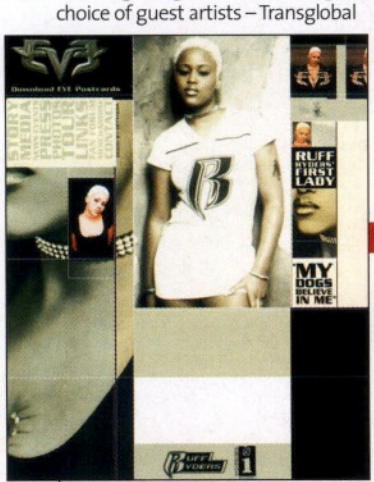
S&M **VERTIGO** ★★★★

You could never accuse Metallica of lacking ambition. First they land helicopters on stage during the climax of *Enter Sandman*, and now they're collaborating with the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra. It's as bombastic as a Brian Blessed convention – the only drawback is that, after hearing them playing with a 96-piece orchestra, all their future efforts might sound a little weedy. ***www.geocities.com/Pipeline/2495/Metallifukinca.html*** The biggest and best of the Metallica fan sites, with hundreds of guitar and bass tabs.

Alanis Morissette

That I Would Be Good (Unplugged) **WEA** ★★

One of the few saving graces about old horse-face is that despite her incessant whinging about India and giving blow-jobs in cinemas, at least you could hum along to the tunes. So these acoustic renderings of *Ironic*, *You Oughta Know* and (oh, smell the fear!) The Police's *King of Pain* are every bit as painful as her acting debut in Kevin Smith's *Dogma*. Still, *Ally McBeal* fans will



ALBUM OF THE MONTH

Eve *Ruff Ryders' First Lady*

RUFF RYDERS/ INTERSCOPE ★★★★★

With TLC continually on the brink of splitting up, there's a gap in the market for a sassy lady who can dish out abuse to men and still look drop dead gorgeous. Eve has all the requisite baggage to be a classic soul diva (a former stripper with gangster affiliations), and while she has a mean way with obscenity, she's clever enough not to display it on *Gotta Man* – a potential number one. The record label is tipped as being 'the new Motown' – if so, Eve is the new Diana Ross. And Customs officials won't mess with *her*. ***www.interscope.com/eve/*** Musical snippets and some snarling mugshots.

Eve loved her bouncy castle

Shut up, woman!

find much here to comfort them in their enforced celibacy.
brunching.com/toys/toy-alanislyrics.html World-famous Alanis lyric generator. Hours of fun guaranteed.

My Life Story
Joined Up Writing **PARLOPHONE**
★★★★
MLS used to be an absurd vaudevillian tribute band, with an over-inflated string section and over-blown songs – and those were the good points. But now singer Jake Shillingford has trimmed the band down to an electronic four-piece, results are much-improved. *It's A Girl Thing* is the classic pop that Elvis Costello doesn't make any more now he's fat and old. Surprise resurrection of the month (MLS that is, not Costello).
www.virtual-pc.com/mls/ News and downloads from the *über-fops*.

William Orbit
Pieces In A Modern Style **WEA**
★★★★
Muzak, anyone? Having made his millions producing Madonna and Blur, the bespectacled one wants to show us that he knows his Dvorak and Bach from his drum 'n' bass. And while his takes on Beethoven and Mozart bear hardly any relation to the originals, it works as the kind of soothing music you hear on Bluewater ads. Maybe they should market it as *The Most Relaxing Classical Ambient Album In The World...Ever!*
www.williamorbit.com/ More graphics here than your average Disney flick; expect to wait...

MLS: improved

Third Eye Foundation
Little Lost Soul **DOMINO**
★★★★
Third Eye Foundation is really Matt Elliott, an ordinary guy who works in a Bristol record store. But in his own, thankless way, he's crafting some of the most exciting music in Britain at the moment. Having gone all drum 'n' bass on his last masterpiece *You Guys Kill Me*, he's now decided to chill, crafting music for futuristic superstores. Fans will be happy that the song titles (*Goddamn You Got To Be Kind*) are still as oblique as ever, however.
www.xs4all.nl/~slavlab/ThirdEyeFoundation/index.html A bit sparse as official sites go, but informative enough, I suppose.

Various Artists
Cream Anthems 2000
VIRGIN ★★★
With trance being the only music that's shifting great quantities at the moment, this compilation is a good way to catch up on what seemingly everyone's gran is listening to. After suffering DJ Jean's *The Launch*, there's actually some engaging stuff, like the Sasha remix of the Chemical Brothers' *Out of Control*.
www.cream.co.uk/ A bit of a favourite meeting place for the dance community, featuring event details and a shop.

Cream: all hands on decks

PICTURES: REDFERNS, RETNA

Various *Stand Up And Be Counted* HARMLESS ★★★★
There are enough soul tunes here to keep Norman Cook in samples for the next millennium. Focussing on the music that soundtracked the US civil rights movement, it mixes the obvious (James Brown's *Say It Loud, I'm Black And Proud*) and the outlandish (Mike James Kirkland's *Hang On In There*). Both a protest and a party album.
www.funky-stuff.com James Brown tribute, with lyrics and latest news.

CLASSIC ALBUM

PiL *Metal Box* VIRGIN *(1979)*
Instead of disappearing after the Sex Pistols, Johnny Rotten formed a new band and crafted the finest album of his career. The music was experimental rather than the expected punk drone, with Lydon wailing like a damned sinner. Ten times scarier than *Blair Witch* and even more compulsive.
www.john-lydon.com/ Catch up on the hellraiser's current whereabouts.

If you can remember this lot, you're old...

Gig and tour guide

JAN Hitting the road to entertain you in January

BERNARD BUTLER
Floppy-haired guitar genius who admits to being a Web fan.
19 January Portsmouth Wedgewood Rooms **20 Jan** Bristol Fiddlers **21 Jan** London Astoria **23 Jan** Cambridge Junction **24 Jan** Norwich Waterfront **25 Jan** Birmingham Ronnie Scotts **27 Jan** Glasgow Garage **28 Jan** Manchester MDH **29 Jan** Sheffield Leadmill **30 Jan** Dublin HQ Club
www.bernardbutler.com

BUSH
Huge in the States but still cruelly under-rated in their native Britain – will this tour change their fortunes?
17 January Wolverhampton Civil Hall **18 Jan** Cambridge Corn Exchange
www.geocities.com/SunsetStrip/8845/index.html

Bush: 'bad' boys

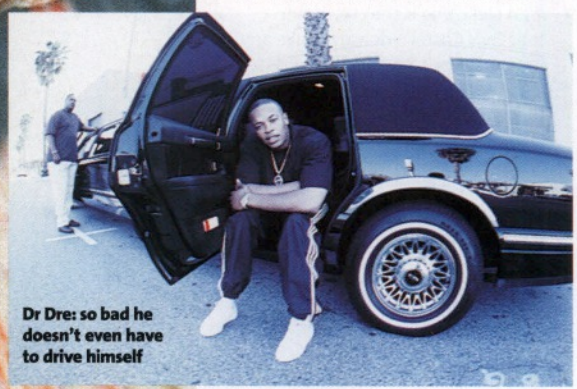
NME PREMIER TOUR
Three of the nation's most exciting musical prospects in the shape of Shack, Les Rhythmes Digital and Coldplay...oh, and let's not forget Campag Velocet.
17 January Glasgow QMU **18 Jan** Leeds Metro University **19 Jan** Newcastle University **21 Jan** Leicester De Montefort University **22 Jan** Manchester University **23 Jan** Sheffield University **25 Jan** Cardiff University **26 Jan** Bristol University **27 Jan** Oxford Brookes University **29 Jan** Norwich UEA **30 Jan** London Astoria
www.nme.com

Campag (top) and LRD

Wannadies: twisted

THE WANNADIES
Swedish popsters most famous for the *You And Me Song* – albeit a few years ago now.
18 January London Dingwalls
www.cossar.co.uk

Hammer's magic pants helped him soar over Vegas



Dr Dre: so bad he doesn't even have to drive himself

Please Hammer don't hurt 'em

RAP Take a whizz round the Web and before long you'll have more hos than Homebase

WORDS: SAM UPTON; PICTURES: RETNA, REDFERNS

Blaze

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

www.blaze.com ★★★★★

Online version of one of America's finest hip hop magazines – look at interviews with Dr Dre and Warren G, download band demos, win a signed Ice T skateboard and – best of all – read hip hop agony aunt Ms Chickenhead. 'Child, it's all good that you don't be puffin' and cursin',' she soothes one troubled soul. 'But shit! You have to realise that being involved with a thug is a 24 hour job.' Damn right.

Bad Boy Records

www.badboy-ent.com ★★★★

Puff Daddy may be as entertaining as watching a drunk bang a tin tray on his head, but his Bad Boy roster includes some of America's finest rappers. The late Notorious B.I.G., Ma$e and Faith all have evidence to back this up here, while the ghetto fabulous superstar himself keeps a merciful distance.

Dancer's Delite

msu.edu/user/okumurak ★★★

You've got the blasta, the soundz, the Tommy Hilfiger hat; all that's required is the moves. Taking in all styles from locking to nu school dance, Dancer's Delite features the history of hip hop shape-making (key 70s figure: Toni Basil of *Hey Mickey* fame) plus tips on how not to dislocate limbs while spinning upside your head.

Kriss Kross: should be in school

Kid 'n' Play: hair today...

Davey D's Hip Hop Corner

www.daveyd.com ★★★★

Davey D is one busy hip hop daddy judging by the enormity of his site. News, reviews and an astounding amount of discussion boards make this one of the finest hip hop sites around. There's also a weekly quiz, with 'Dr Funkenstein' the current brainiac to beat.

Dr Dre

www.Dr-Dre.com ★★★

Responsible for some of the most incendiary rap music of the '80s with NWA and career kick-starter of Snoop Doggy Dogg, Warren G plus foul-mouthed mall rat Eminem, Dr Dre is one of rap's most influential figures. Provided he stays out of jail he'll appear for chats.

H-Dog

www.theonion.com/archives_index.html ★★★★★

The Onion may be popular to the point that half the world is now making 'Special Forces' jokes, but one of its stars remains joyously anonymous. H-Dog (alias Herbert Kornfield) may be a whiteboy office droog but he talks like Mack Daddy. 'I'm Tha Stone Cold Funky-Fresh Bad-Ass of Accountz Reeceevable' he boasts. 'And I don't need no dust-crotch supervisor ho wantin' to freak my ass!' Very funny.

Pimp Daddy Welfare

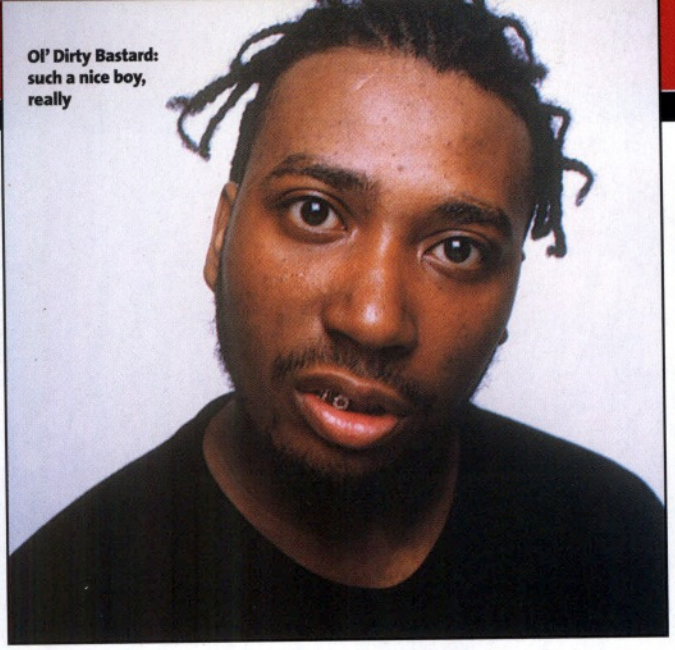
www.geocities.com/SunsetStrip/Mezzanine/3377/main.html ★★★★

'The following pages may be offensive' warns the opening page, and damn my AK if they aren't. Gloriously unprofessional and rude, this Texan whiteboy Jewish rapper provides tons of his own MP3 tracks (example title: *Mother Goose Bumps Her Head Against My Balls*) and a not insignificant amount of swearing. Not one for those of a nervous disposition.

The Rap Dictionary

www.rapdict.org ★★★★

If the words 'badass chronic', 'wack booty' and 'da stupid dope loop is like shimmy shimmy la!' send you into fits of confusion, then some


Ol' Dirty Bastard: such a nice boy, really

education in rap speak is clearly in order. Ranging from the plain obvious to the utterly bizarre, this A-Z should have you talking like a Brooklyn playa in no time and provide plenty of ribald expressions for 'gettin' wit da ladeez'. Ay yo trip!

The V.I.P (Vanilla Ice Page)

www4.ncsu.edu/~msmckinn/ice/vanilla_ice.html ★★★

The official world's worst rapper (after MC Hammer and Kriss Kross, who are still best known for their penchant for dodgy trousers) still has many fans, and what a treat is in store for those in the Vanilla Ice know – a biog, discography, movie appearances and a recent interview in which Rob Van Winkle explains why he thinks we're all aliens and, come the millennium, God will land on Earth in a time machine. Sadly missed.

Vanilla Ice: an acquired taste

Wu Tang Clan

www.sonymusic.com/labels/loud/wu/wu.html ★★★

Known equally well by right-thinking rap fans and US police departments, the Wu Tang Clan are da bomb. As famous for their Wu-Wear range of clothing and nail varnishes as their music, they're the great hopes of the hip hop scene. Big fans of chess, apparently – it 'sharpens warfare skills and killer instincts.'

Wu-Tang Clan: nail varnish moguls

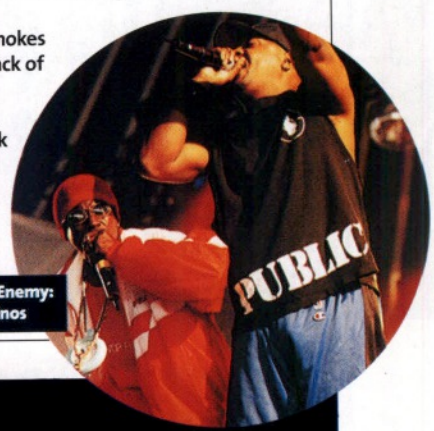
HIP HOP'S WORST LYRICS

Down in Hackney?

While most rap lyrics are, of course, the work of crazed genius, there are the occasional head-scratchingly bad ones. Like these, for example:

- **'Anything goes when it comes to hos, cos pimpin' ain't easy'** Big Daddy Kane – *Pimpin' Ain't Easy*
- **'I know a girl, her name is Lola. She lives in a country called Angola'** Stetsasonic – *Africa*
- **'Me and Eric B and a nice big plate of fish, which is my favourite dish, but without the cash it's still a wish'** Eric B and Rakim – *Paid In Full*
- **'I'm rough! Hurrrrrrrgh! And I'm down in Hackney'** Overlord X – *Down in Hackney*
- **'Our manager's crazy, he always smokes dust, he's got his own room at the back of the bus'** Beastie Boys – *No Sleep 'Til Brooklyn*
- **'When the rebel gets final, on black vinyl, soul, rock'n'roll comin' like a rhino'** Public Enemy – *Rebel Without A Pause*

There's more – find your own instant classics at ***www.nycity.demon.co.uk*** or ***www.ohhla.com/index.htm***



Public Enemy: like rhinos

best music sites ★★★★★

where can I...

FIND OUT ABOUT MP3s?

www.mp3.com
Get started on the official site, with heaps of legal downloads and exclusive contact.
mp3.lycos.com
Browse the world of MP3s using a comprehensive search engine.
www.mp3now.com
One of the most popular MP3 portals, now expanding into the UK.
www.cddb.com
Produces a chart of the top online songs by tracking downloads.

FIND A BAND SITE?

www.ubl.com
Make this the first stop on your quest – for its huge search engine.
www.bigmouth.co.uk
UK-specific site with tons of links.
www.musicsearch.com
Find sites for artists or music-related services. Efficient and quick.
www.music999.com
Portal for all good British music, featuring an artist guide.

VIEW THE LATEST NEWS AND REVIEWS?

www.rollingstone.com
The well-written US publication features extra online content.
www.music365.co.uk
Enjoyable features.
www.onlinepop.co.uk
Reviews, news and pop interviews from this defiantly amateur fanzine site.
www.dotmusic.com
British site for all rock and pop news and links.

Welcome to the Jungle: plenty of bargains to be had at www.jungle.com

BUY NEW CDS?

www.audiostreet.com
Cheap, easy-to-navigate CD store with a large back catalogue.
www.boxman.co.uk
Competitive, and very easy on the eye.
www.jungle.com
The shopping portal's music section is cheap and very cheerful.
www.yalplay.com
Popular CD and video store. Very easy to use.

BUY TICKETS FOR GIGS?

www.ticketmaster.co.uk
Buy your tickets for any live gig online.
www.aloud.com
Offers a nationwide gig guide.
www.lastminute.com
Excellent bargains on late tickets.
www.ticketzone.co.uk
The biggest events offered online.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

alt.music.wu-tang-clan
Learn how to make your way into the 36 Chambers – if you dare.

JOIN A MAILING LIST?

For the lowdown on the latest rap releases, subscribe from ***www.onelist.com/subscribe.cgi/rapmusicreview***

GET CHATTING?

www.tupac.com
Chat 'in the spirit of Tupac Shakur'.

Looking for more Music sites? Turn to Need To Know on page 108

Sheryl found the ID parade a little difficult

Seen the team, got the T-shirt

KITTED OUT If you want to be a world-beater, you'll need to buy the right kit – and here's where to go

Just Balls

www.justballs.com

★★★★

When they say just balls, they mean just balls. Spherical objects of wonder for everything from baseball to water polo; but make sure you buy in bulk – as it's a US site the shipping costs are high. Why not buy a 'Bigen', an inflatable fun ball which can be pumped up to an incredible 50 inches in diameter, thus resembling that great big thing from Indiana Jones. 3

Imelda Marcos loved football

Kitbag

www.kitbag.com ★★★★★

Kitbag offers shirts and stuff for every major British football club, including a Blackburn Rovers toiletry set (the unkind might say there's enough crap at Ewood Park already...) as well as cricket and rugby equipment. Easy-to-use interface, but why no other sports? 3

Kits Direct

www.kitsdirect.co.uk ★★★

Football kits (original designs, not club kit replicas), bags and balls, with pictures posed by unfeasibly athletic-looking models. Still, at least they're cheap. 3

Manchester United

shop.manutd. com

★★

Roll up, roll up, for the magnificent Manchester United Megastore. There's no product too tenuous to have a Red Devils logo stamped on it these days – watches, stationery, bedspreads, radios... they're all here in this Aladdin's Cave of shameless merchandise. The only thing they can't sell you is a ticket to see United play. 3

Liz was unhappy with Philip's new look

Kids in a box: wrong *and* illegal

Newitts

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

www.newitts.com

★★★★★

A spot of lacrosse this weekend, Sir? How about some beach volleyball? Or street hockey? Whatever your sporting pursuit of choice, you'll find the kit you need to play it here. And it's not just shirts and shorts either; there's gloves for boxing, cues for pool and even a selection of whistles, all available to buy online. The prices seem reasonable, too (though who among us really knows if £37 for a darts mat is cheap or not?). They've even thoughtfully added a chat room and a Flash penalty shoot-out game for good measure. Suits you. 2 3 6 7

Online Golf Shop

www.online-golf.co.uk

★★★★

Funny old game, golf. No other sport would even consider such a ridiculous dress code so essential, nor regard everyday sporting overexuberance as wrong. Still, if you're teeing off any time soon, Online Golf will sort you out with the requisite Pringle jumper – and offer online tuition, all the latest scores and a potted rules guide to boot. 3

Simply Sports

www.simplysports.co.uk ★★

Now here's an odd one; Simply Sports can't offer secure online ordering just yet, but they do cater for your every need if croquet, table tennis, chess, backgammon or table football tickle your fancy. Or how about a Boxes Garden Quoits Set? Fun for all the family...if your family don't like leaving the house. 3

Soccer Scene World Of Football

www.soccerscene.com ★★★

Soccer Scene, nestled discreetly in a corner of London's fashionable Carnaby Street, has long been a mecca for the football aficionado who simply must have that Real Madrid 1967 away shirt. Though their online presence can never rival the sheer joy of hours spent perusing the kits of the world, there's an exhaustive range on this site. 3 7

Sports Shoes Unlimited

www.sportsshoes.com ★★★

Footwear might not be a primary consideration for most blokes, but

Australians: hate Pepsi

when it comes to sport, the right shoe is essential. Sports Shoes has boots for every occasion and activity, though the old problem of not getting the right size first time will continue to hold back the online footwear market, for now. 3

UK Golf Shop

www.theproshop.co.uk ★★★★

Free delivery and competitive prices make this arguably the best online golf shop around. It's pleasing to use and quick to find what you want, but it won't make the blasted game any easier to understand. 3

best sport sites ★★★★★

where can I...

FIND THE LATEST NEWS AND SCORES?

espn.go.com

Fast scores from every sport, plus news with an American bias.

www.sportlive.net

The *Express*-backed site gives a useful smattering of news and info.

www.soccernet.com

Score flashes from all UK games, plus a newswire.

www.sporting-life.com

News, scores and betting advice from the paper of the same name.

Follow the unfolding European Cup action on the popular www.scrum.com

FIND TOP FOOTBALL SITES?

www.football 365.co.uk

Exciting, fast-improving daily paper with offbeat news and humour. Customised emails available.

www.soccerbase.com

A stats fan's virtual heaven – all the info you could want.

www.teamtalk.com

Premium-rate phone lines for your club are transferred to the Net – and they don't cost a penny.

ukfootballpages.com

Official and fan links for every Premiership, Nationwide League and non-league club.

Sport news and views to suit every taste at sportlive.net

FIND THE BEST SITES FOR POPULAR SPORTS?

www.cricinfo.com

The Internet Movie Database of cricket sites (if that makes sense), with thousands of the choicest links.

www.scrum.com

Widely regarded as the best rugby site on the Web.

www.pga.com

Golf's governing body scores a hole-in-one with this informative site. Offers golfing email addresses too.

www.lta.org.uk

Advice for all aspiring tennis professionals, plus official news.

FIND FIXTURES?

www.sportcal.co.uk/public/online.htm

Events and sponsors for five years.

www.pa.press.net/sport/calendar/

Indispensable PA guide to the whole sporting year.

www.sportlive.net

Join the *Express* site for your own email sports diary.

www.digitaldiscounts.com/sports.html

Unexciting but extremely informative fixture guide.

FOLLOW EVENTS LIVE?

www.planetfootball.com

Hub site for English football clubs' RealAudio broadcasts.

www.sportlist.com

Interactive guide to every sport-related show on British television.

www.broadcast.com/sports/soccer

From Derby County to the Jamaican national side in RealAudio. Good search facility.

www.golfboxx.com

Every major tour event in RealAudio, plus an interactive 'Golf Doctor' to help you perfect your swing.

PLACE AN ONLINE BET?

www.sportsadviser.com

Latest odds and free advice covering a wide range of sports.

www.williamhill.co.uk

Get British bookies' odds and place bets online. Reliable and popular.

www.bluesq.com

Register for user-friendly betting from the upmarket bookies.

www.inter-bet.com

One of the oldest, most popular Net bookies. Easy to use and competitive.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

rec.sport.soccer

A useful place to swap or sell obscure kit, and chat generally.

JOIN A MAILING LIST?

Send the command 'subscribe horseracing' to ***majordomo @listserv.prodigy.com*** to subscribe to the best online racing chat.

GET CHATTING?

www.sportlive.net

Plenty of chat and general sports news from the *Daily Express*.

Looking for more sport sites? Turn to Need To Know on page 108

WORDS: ROBERT JEFFERY; PICTURES: REX, RETNA

COSTLINESS

How much, mate?

The days of jumpers for goalposts are long gone. These days, you're not an athlete unless you're sporting the latest kit with the price tag still attached. So how much will you have to shell out for sport? Well, unless you've got a second mortgage up your sleeve, golf's a no-no for starters. A trawl round ***www.theproshop.co.uk*** will set you back a minimum of £500 for basic clubs, balls, clothing and a bag; that's without green fees, membership or lessons. Lacrosse is no walk in the park; £450 for the basic kit from *newitts.com*, with bowls a ridiculous £700. Too much? Try darts at a mere £100 or boxing at £80 for gloves, headguard and bag. Sadly, the cost of damage to health and/or reputation in either sport is immeasurable.

Big Bird loved to caddy for Stewart

The UK's No1 online betting service

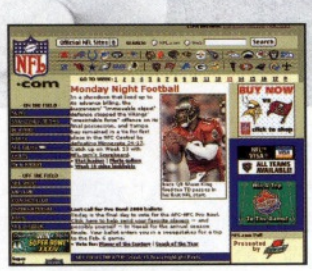
BLUE SQ.

www.bluesq.com

Over 18s only. Rules apply – available on request at www.bluesq.com

Run OJ, run

Hanks: chimp



NFL.com

www.nfl.com ★★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

Americans are notoriously anal about their sport, but there's no denying the quality of information available about it on the Web. Here there's just about everything you'd ever need to keep up with the NFL, including loads of video action. We'd still like a couple of things explained, though: why is it called football when the ball is handled, and why are fat blokes like ex-Chicago Bears William 'The Fridge' Perry able to make a living out of it, and therefore be termed professional athletes?

best sport sites ★★★★★

where can I...

JOIN A TEAM?

www.sportlive.net
Check out the 'grass roots' section for links to hundreds of local teams.

www.golflink.com
Find a golf club, or even a partner, through the classified sections.

BUY ACCESSORIES ONLINE?

www.sportsconnection.co.uk
Shop online for sportswear, equipment and accessories.

www.sportspages.co.uk
Net bookshop specialising in sporting titles.

LEARN THE RULES?

www-uk.cricket.org
Cricket's home page explains the lbw rule for confused Americans.

www.referee.com
You're certain to get your rule questions answered here. Just don't argue with what they tell you.

FIND A NEW SPORT?

www.sportszine.co.uk
Comprehensive links to UK sites, from athletics to wrestling.

www.sports365.co.uk
Great new sport portal full of interesting links and information.

GET OFF THE COUCH?

www.ticketmaster.co.uk/sport
Online ticket ordering for all major UK sports events.

www.premierswap.com
Claims to be an 'Internet market' for football fans, with ticket swaps and sales.

LEARN A MARTIAL ART?

www.martialarts.net
Links and information for all manner of martial arts – plus it's an ISP to boot.

www.kungfu.cc
Useful kung fu course which lets you learn online.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

rec.sport.football.pro
Swap news and views with other gridiron enthusiasts.

Plenty of sporting information at sports365.co.uk

JOIN A MAILING LIST?

Enjoy all the best sport trivia and rules from ***www.2play.com/surveys.htm***

GET CHATTING?

www.sportsline.com/u/football/nfl/enterchat.htm
Just about the most popular NFL chat room out there.

'It's just rugby in helmets...'

AMERICAN FOOTBALL The Yanks' favourite pastime has never been more popular this side of the pond

Denver Broncos

www.denverbroncos.com ★★★★★

There's no way they'll be Superbowl champions come the end of the month, but the Broncos did manage to pull off back-to-back wins in the last two years, so they deserve respect. The site is a pretty much bog-standard team affair, but offers everything for the discerning fan.

Exhaustive Expository Concordance Of The NFL

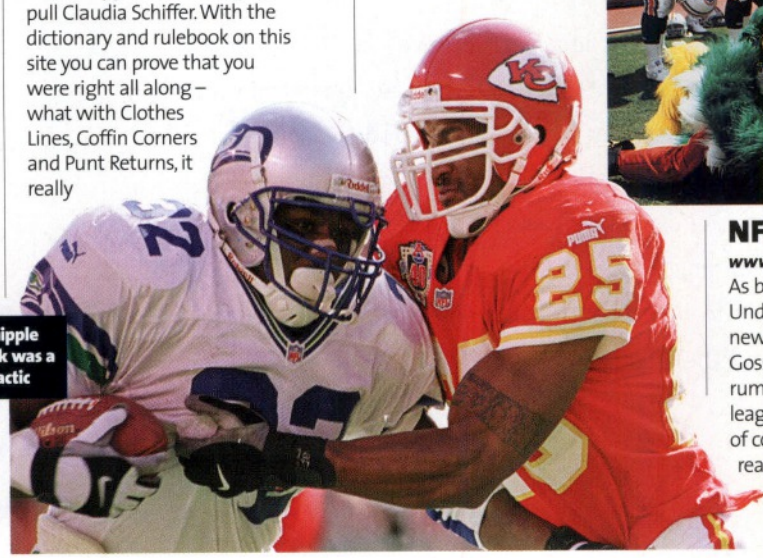
www.nflhistory.com ★★★★

In English, that means a very thorough history of the NFL. And thorough is certainly the word, with so many stats and articles that the NFL will probably be 10 years older by the time you've read it. Finding your way round can be confusing – but then it's a confusing game...

Football.com

www.football.com ★★★★

For many people, American football makes about as much sense as David Copperfield managing to pull Claudia Schiffer. With the dictionary and rulebook on this site you can prove that you were right all along – what with Clothes Lines, Coffin Corners and Punt Returns, it really *doesn't* make any sense. And take the opportunity to play the fantasy league game – it's safer than the real thing.


The nipple tweak was a top tactic

Rod Hull Jnr could never forgive Emu

NFLtalk.com

www.nfltalk.com ★★★★

As busy as rush hour on the London Underground, this site presents news, news and... more news. Gossip is rife, with opinions, rumours and stories about the league and all the teams in it; and, of course, there are the obligatory reams of statistics. There's even content from all the local news sources for each team. Satisfied? You will be.

WORDS: PAUL WINSLOW; PICTURES: KOBAL, SYGMA

Spending time on the Internet can be good for your health.

Find the best health sites at ukplus.co.uk

www.ukplus.co.uk

The Internet is bursting with great ideas to improve your health and fitness. But ask an ordinary search engine to seek out health and fitness websites and you'll end up with far more than is good for you. So if you want the sites that really do put you on top form, come to UKPlus. We've already done the hard work to make sure the selection you get is leaner and fitter than anything else on the Internet. Sites that cover everything from Tai Chi to herbal tea. Proving once again that UKPlus is definitely the best of the web without the rest of the web.

The best of the web without the rest of the web

'What was that, Lassie?'

ANIMALS Killer whales don't demand bigger trailers or flounce out if they can't get a massage. Which could explain Hollywood's love of the animal star...

The Littlest Hobo Page

www.members.tripod.com/kevinmccorrytv/hobo.html ★★★★

The most memorable thing about this programme was its annoying theme tune, which – we guarantee – will remain in your head for longer than the last series ran (six years) after you've downloaded it. In case you'd forgotten, the Hobo was actually a uncannily talented German Shepherd who wandered Canada rescuing the stranded. And that was it. This site is pretty much text-based, but there are some photographs to remind you how utterly bad the show actually was.

Rex was quietly confident at the Littlest Hobo auditions

Luke Halpin – Star of Flipper

www.lukehalpin.com ★★★

Reminisce with Halpin (Sandy in the watery show), who's now 52 and sports a fetching 'tache. There's a load of FAQs which should keep even the most ardent *Flipper* fan satisfied, including 'why do you think the *Flipper* series has had such longevity?'

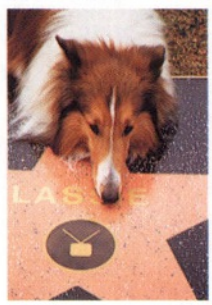
'Show's over, Dad. Now shoot it'

The Lassie Network

thenet AWARD

www.lassie.net ★★★★★

Good grief – we knew the pooch was popular, but this is quite ridiculous. This comprehensive site has movie lists as well as training tips (unfortunately omitting the how-to-get-your-dog-to-run-halfway-up-a-mountain-to-rescue-you one), fan club and museum. But most fun are the TV listings: a typical episode sees Lassie 'concerned over the fate of a magician's pigeon'. Must have missed that one...



Best of all, you can order a photo of the freckled, cheeky Halpin himself ($20 signed, $40 signed with a personal message), then download the theme tune. Altogether now: 'They call him Flipper, faster than lightning...'

Mr Ed, The Talking Horse

www.members.home.net/mister-ed/ ★★★★

'Mister Ed will never speak unless he has something to say,' went the theme tune of the show that ran for a whopping 143 episodes back in the 1960s. Ed was a remarkably clever horse among remarkably stupid humans, who never twigged that it was a touch odd that he could talk, surf, *and* fly an airplane. This site is a labour of love with cast lists, a downloadable version of the theme tune and such photographs as 'Ed on the phone'. Of course.

'How do I know? I'm a horse'

Ocean Futures

www.keiko.org ★★★★

Nestling among the other marine life on this worthy site is Keiko's Corner, Web home of the killer whale who starred in the 1992 film *Free Willy*. After the film – and 14 years in captivity – the whale was moved from Oregon to a vast pen in Iceland. There's video of the move, news on Keiko's progress, and the chance to ask her keepers questions about the whale herself as well as marine life in general.

Willy pined for Jacko's warbling

best celebrity sites ★★★★★

where can I...

FIND GOOD GOSSIP?

www.mrshowbiz.com
The fastest track to loads of celebrity gossip, with the occasional exclusive, too.
www.celebrityalace.com
Plenty of gossip, plus links and resources.

READ MAGAZINES?

www.eonline.com
Get in touch with the latest happenings in the worlds of music, TV, film and video.
www.people.com
The popular US *People* magazine. Not exactly upmarket, but good fun.

FIND CELEBRITY HOME PAGES?

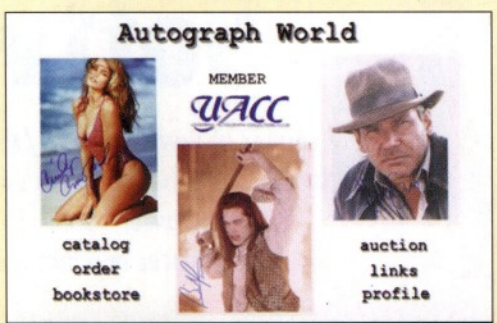
www.celebsites.com
Links to official sites of celebs from all walks of fame and fortune.
www.celebhoo.com
Useful new search engine for all relevant information about your favourite celebs.

FIND A STAR'S ADDRESS?

www.thezone.pair.com/email
Not just for celebrity emails; their addresses are available, too.
www.celebrityemail.com
Over 14,000 celebs on its pages, from supermodels to princes.

BUY CELEBRITY ITEMS?

celebrityconnection.com/index.html
Buy and sell autographs, memorabilia, props and wardrobes.
www.autographworld.com
One of the biggest and most useable online autograph stores there is.



Signatures of the rich and famous at autographworld.com

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

rec.pets.dogs.behaviour
Train your paunchy pooch to be a modern day Lassie.

JOIN A MAILING LIST?

Send an email marked 'info' to ***efoley@tiac.net*** to discuss Celebrity Death Pools, and decide who might pop their proverbial clogs next.

MEET MY HERO?

www.yack.com
Updated list of compulsive celebrity events from across the Web.
chat.yahoo.com
Weighty round-up of chat sessions.

GET CHATTING?

www.geocities.com/TheTropics/8175/flipper.htm
Your chance to join in the thrilling Flipper chat that takes place every Monday.

WORDS: SARAH WAKELY; PICTURES: TOPHAM PICTUREPOINT, SCOPE, SYGMA

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Enter your email address at www.qxl.com/thenet to receive our free Bargain Alerts and the chance to WIN a 21" monitor

*For full terms and conditions, visit www.qxl.com/thenet

FREE Software

Register at www.qxl.com/thenet and you can choose from one of the following software titles: Forsaken, Adidas Power Soccer, Nuclear Strike, Visual Explorer and more, absolutely FREE.

*Supplies are limited, see www.qxl.com/thenet for details

QXL.com online auctions

www.qxl.com/thenet

For all trade enquiries email us at trade@qxl.com

Kuoni

www.kuoni.co.uk ★★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

We'll forgive them for creating the verb 'mouseover' ('mouseover the buttons below' it says), because the long-haul supremo's site eliminates the need to go to a High Street travel agent. True online booking only works if a site gives you enough information to choose when and where you want to go; this does. And, if you're obsessed by weather, you'll love the climate charts for each destination.

If Pedro's hand 'slipped' once more, Glenda would deck him

Why life's not always better in the sun

Sun, sea, sand and Web sites

TOUR OPERATORS & AGENTS We've all heard of Expedia, but what are the traditional travel names up to online?

Airtours

www.airtours.co.uk ★★★

Despite being under threat from the Net, many of the big travel agents and tour operators still expect you to pick up the phone when it comes to actually booking. This annoyed us initially, but apparently people still want the security of talking to a human being before they commit their cash. Hence the value in sites like these which let you check availability online. This has a search facility and offers excellent bargains of the day (fancy 21 nights in the Algarve for £69?). Visit for both last-minute and long-range bookings.

British Airways Holidays

www.british-airways.com ★★★

A near winner until we asked it to find a flight to Male (capital of the Maldives) and the search engine came back with the news that 'British Airways doesn't fly to Mulu'. If you're willing to trust the site after this – and they do say it's better to travel hopefully than arrive – then it does appear to offer a useful holiday matching service, for which you have to register, and you can book online up to 355 days in advance. However, since British Airways has made it clear that it doesn't want riff-raff on its planes, we don't know if you can really expect to get any bargains of the century.

Bridge Travel

www.bridge-travel.co.uk ★★★★

In case you didn't know it, these are the masters of the mini-break to Europe, and you can book a goodly crop of long weekends and midweek trips online. The hotel search wizard called Bob lets you be highly particular about your particulars (important on a mini-break; can you expect a hairdryer, for instance), and shows you pictures of the hotel you've chosen, as well as suggesting other hotels elsewhere in Europe that you might like. Cheers, Bob.

Club 18-30

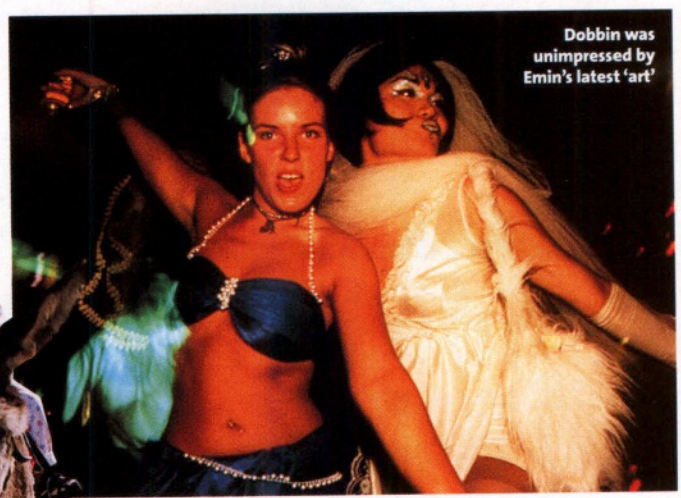
www.club18-30.co.uk ★★★★

Despite its prudish knockers, the sound of a beating heart on the home page shows that Club 18-30 is very much alive. An excellent resource for the committed 18-30 Clubber: you can check availability and then link direct to the Thomas Cook site to book (see Thomas Cook, overleaf). Download music and screensavers and, best of all, video of previous 18-30 capers. You're also not too late to apply to be one of the Club 18-30 models for 2000-2001.

Club Freestyle

www.clubfreestyle.co.uk ★★★

Thomson's answer to the above has no online booking but has lots to offer as a true lads abroad site. You can check availability and it has all the essential location information, such as number of bars (150 in just one street in Ibiza's case), distance from the airport (ie length of time from plane to your first beer), plus natty climate charts. A free lilo is given away with each booking.



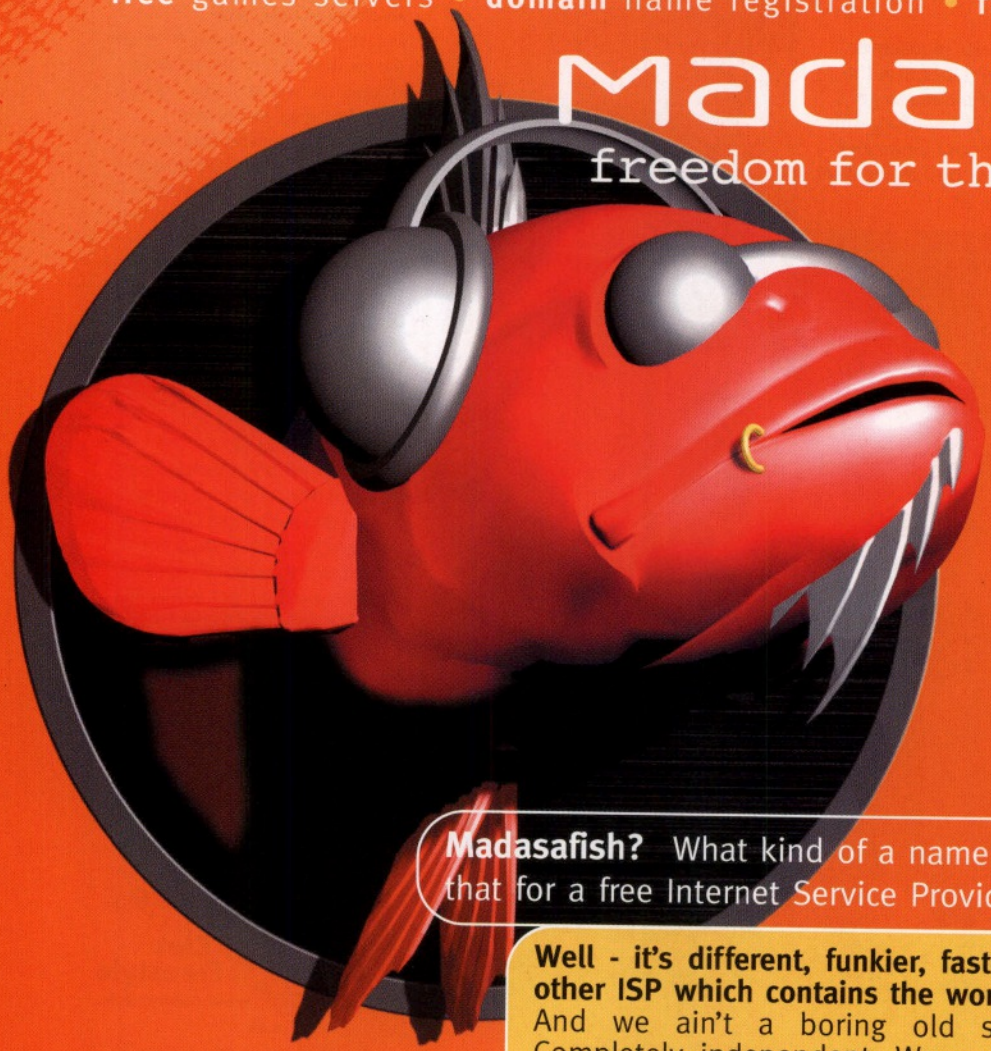
Dobbin was unimpressed by Emin's latest 'art'

WORDS: SUE WEEKES; PICTURES: REX, SYGMA

• **no** engaged tones or downtime • **unlimited** personal e-mail • **unlimited** personal web space
• **fastest** downloads on the planet • **no** subscription charges • **easy** website building tools
• **free** games servers • **domain** name registration • **free** mp3 music • **free** support

Madasafish

freedom for the net generation



Madasafish? What kind of a name's that for a free Internet Service Provider?

Well - it's different, funkier, faster and friendlier than any other ISP which contains the word free.
And we ain't a boring old supermarket chain either. Completely independent. We run our own network - with superfast connectivity. And our own support centre.

We know what you want from your ISP.
You want it free. Fast. With unlimited webspace, email, newsgroups. Free fast games servers. Free MP3 music to go. The full monty...

Madasafish
Fast, free ISP with attitude

And we know what you really really don't want.
You don't want downtime, engaged tones and a naff email address.

If you have any problems, don't panic, call **01851 777727** and one of our esteemed customer service agents will help you solve it right away. And don't worry - it's not a premium rate call (like some other "free" ISPs) just your telephone provider's normal charges...

So that's it then. It's Madasafish for you. You get everything you want - with no downtime and no engaged tones. And you get a Madasafish email address. Sorted.

for FREE internet access call **0800 0273373** or visit

www.madasafish.com for details

Saga's Death Valley break soon took its toll

Thomas Cook

www.thomascook.co.uk ★★★★

We don't want to overstate the point, but we were a tad let down when we had to turn to the old dog and bone to complete the booking procedure. However, we appreciate the thinking that people still like to hear a human voice and you can leave your details for Thomas Cook's online people to ring you back. Certainly a better option than wasting your entire lunch break waiting for a smiley travel agent to become available.

Thomson Holidays

www.thomson-holidays.co.uk ★★

With Just.co.uk as Thomson's Net arm, this seems happy to be more of an information site. However, this doesn't excuse the thin-as-a-Ritz cracker destination info. Shame the rest of the site doesn't mirror the excellent cruise section which imparts information of real use, including what clothes to pack: 'By day, the mood aboard ship is casual so sportswear is fine...After 6pm, things become dressier.' Well, you wouldn't want to disappoint the captain, would you?

Just Holidays

www.just.co.uk ★★★★

This is the Net-only arm of Thomson Holidays and it shows lots of promise. You can check availability but, ultimately, have to pick up the phone to book. However, we really warmed to its neat, Net-friendly devices such as a shortlist suitcase, which gathers the holiday options (departure dates, resorts and so on) that you've gone through. Prices look encouraging and it also has an excellent travel A-Z.

The Gatwick party was swinging

Lunn Poly

www.lunnpoly.com ★★

Lunn Poly's got a Web site? Get away. Anything of real interest here – such as winter sun and summer holiday discounts – is still 'under construction' at the moment. There's no online booking but you can use the Thomson late-finder to see what's available at the last minute and there's a price guide to flights. Overall, though, it's disappointing.

DOING IT YOURSELF

Welcome to the Hotel California

If you don't trust travel agents to book your hotel then why not arrange it yourself? Booking accommodation online is easy. Many hotels have their own sites that allow you to make a reservation without leaving your computer. Alternatively use a specific booking service such as Travelocity (*www.travelocity.com*) or Expedia (*www.expedia.co.uk*). You can specify where in a city you want to stay and what facilities you'd like. Just make sure that the owner isn't a Mr N. Bates.

'I bathed this morning, thanks'

best travel sites ★★★★★

where can I...

FIND THE BEST HOLIDAY AND FLIGHT DEALS?

expedia.co.uk
Microsoft's flights and holidays site.
www.lastminute.com
Massively popular and useable guide to late deals and bargains.
www.a2btravel.co.uk
Britain's biggest online travel agent.
www.travelocity.co.uuk
Popular online travel finder.

GET DESTINATION INFO?

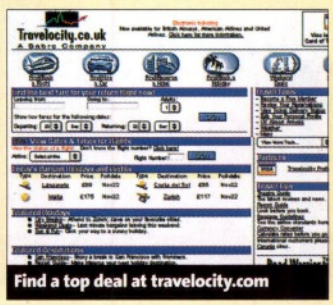
www.Travel-Library.com
Resources and links for any country.
www.roughguides.com
From the publishers of the guides.
www.vtourist.com
Talk to fellow tourists before you set off, or use the directory for more info.
www.lonelyplanet.com
Everything you'd expect from the purveyors of quality travel guides.

GET DO'S AND DON'TS?

www.etravel.org
Online travel mag, with handy tips.
www.tips4trips.com
1,000 handy 'tips for trips'.
www.totaltravel.net
Advice and experiences, plus links to airlines, hotels and weather.
www.fieldingtravel.com/df/index.htm
The world's most dangerous places, and how to get into them.

SPEND A DAY OUT IN BRITAIN?

www.LondonTown.com/indexz.html
Everything to do and see in London.
www.virgin.net/daysout
A variety of ideas and tips from Virgin.
www.smoothhound.co.uk
A guide to B&Bs and hotels across the whole UK.
www.knowhere.co.uk
Guide to the backwaters of Britain.



Find a top deal at travelocity.com

NEWSGROUP?

alt.travel.canada
Follow in the footsteps of our intrepid Canadian Net explorer.

JOIN A MAILING LIST?

Join the pack at the Internet Travel Network list. Put 'subscribe' in the message to ***listserv@sunnyside.com.***

GET CHATTING?

www.chitchat.com.au
If you're taking the plunge and starting afresh – or maybe just visiting – down under, check in at this site first.

Looking for more Travel sites? Turn to Need To Know on page 108

the future of music is in your hands

MP3 has taken the States by storm. Now it's right here at Dixons - the biggest thing in digital music since the CD. Suddenly, you can unleash the music power of the Internet and capture it in the palm of your hand, from just £99.99

internet music

With MP3 technology, you can download digital quality music direct from the Net – the latest tracks as well as unique recordings by your favourite musicians – many free and often unavailable elsewhere.

neat, sweet, discreet

Ultra-compact, ultra-light, personal MP3 players are giants of mini technology – and there's a huge range to choose from at Dixons. No moving parts, shock and skip resistant, MP3 is ideal for music on the move.

use your pc like a jukebox

Convert your CD's using MP3 and store them on your PC's hard drive. Then, using 'jukebox' software, create your own play list, compile new album mixes, even email them to your friends.

10 MP3 players to be won!

In our free on-line competition.
To find out more visit our web-site now!
www.dixons.co.uk

MP3 the new direction in digital music

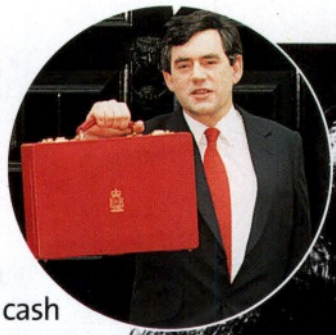
*PICK UP YOUR FREE FREESERVE CD IN-STORE NOW.

Dixons

▷ Buy On-line: www.dixons.co.uk

▷ Buy Direct: 08000 68 28 68

Talking with the taxman



'Mr Dodd, your tax return is due'

PAIN Not filled in that Self Assessment form yet? Let these sites help you hang on to your cash

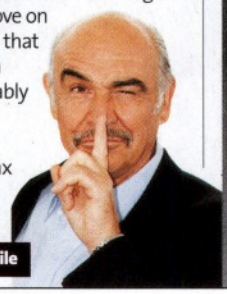
Digita

www.digita.com ★★★

This new site is stronger on tools than on content, but there are some nice touches, including a downloadable tax return to fill in (which you'll be able to file electronically from April, but sorry – it's post or fax for now). You can also check your payslip, find out if you're entitled to working families' tax credit or get help choosing a tax adviser. There's even a calendar – so your last excuse for getting the deadline confused has just evaporated...

Capone: jailed

useful for its News and Alert sections – worth keeping an eye on if you're looking for the latest on the opening (or, more often, the closing) of tax loopholes. And should you need a personal reminder to get a move on with that form (and you probably will), there's a very clear summary of Tax Return dates and penalties.


Connery: exile

Inland Revenue

www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/home.htm ★★★

Despite the cheery greeting on the home page, this is one scary Government site. It's handy, though – you can complete your tax return using the EVR software package to beat the deadline. It's easy to find your way around using the clear index, and there's a link to the Tax Adjudicator's office – for when fiscal fights break out.

LineOne Tax Club

www.lineone.net/clubs/money/tax/tax_front-d.html ★★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

Reassuring and clear, this site is welcome relief after some other efforts. While LineOne takes tax seriously, it isn't averse to a laugh: the writing throughout is dryly amusing, and there are both fun tax history and famous tax quotation sections. One of the best features is Ask Dr Tax – we bet you'll find your query answered here; if not, ask the Doc. Only rarely does the site abandon you to the clutches of the Government: click on 'self employed' and you're whisked to the Inland Revenue. But it's a winner – there's even a link to a links site, so you can always find an accountant to do the job.

Moneyworld

www.moneyworld.co.uk/tax/index.html ★★★★

Bright, breezy and blue: the Moneyworld site has a good tax section with tables to let you know what level you should be taxed at, rates of relief on life assurance and two tax calculators. There's a useful glossary of financial gobbledegook, plus a comprehensive tax guide. It packs more into its pages than many a larger site, and will make an invaluable quick reference tool.

Thomson Tax Online

www.thomtax.co.uk ★★★

Really intended for professionals, this site is nonetheless

Piggott's Long John was the hit of the prison panto

WORDS: ANN OLIVER; PICTURES: REX, SYGMA

best money sites ★★★★★ where can I...

LEARN ABOUT INVESTING?

www.mrscohen.com
Bernice Cohen on investing money.
www.fool.co.uk
Advice for the learner investor.
www.armchairmillionaire.com
Guide to making a million.

GET FINANCIAL ANALYSIS?

www.invweek.co.uk
From *Investment Week*.
www.economist.com
150 years of sagacity online.
www.hemscott.com
Get access to a mine of analysis.

GET MONEY NEWS AND SHARE PRICES?

www.ft.com
The mother of all money sites.
www.bloomberg.co.uk
Up-to-date data for professionals.
www.ukinvest.com
News and real-time quotes.

TRADE SHARES?

www.stocktrade.co.uk
Dealers in UK stocks.
www.barclays-stockbrokers.co.uk
Offers real-time dealing and advice.
www.forex-cmc.co.uk
First online foreign-exchange dealer.

SORT OUT MY FINANCES?

www.thisismoney.com
Online personal finance adviser to help you with you cash problems.
www.iii.co.uk
Advice for individual investors.

Want to save money? Head for www.thisismoney.com

www.times-money.co.uk
Advice, glossary and exchange rates for investors.

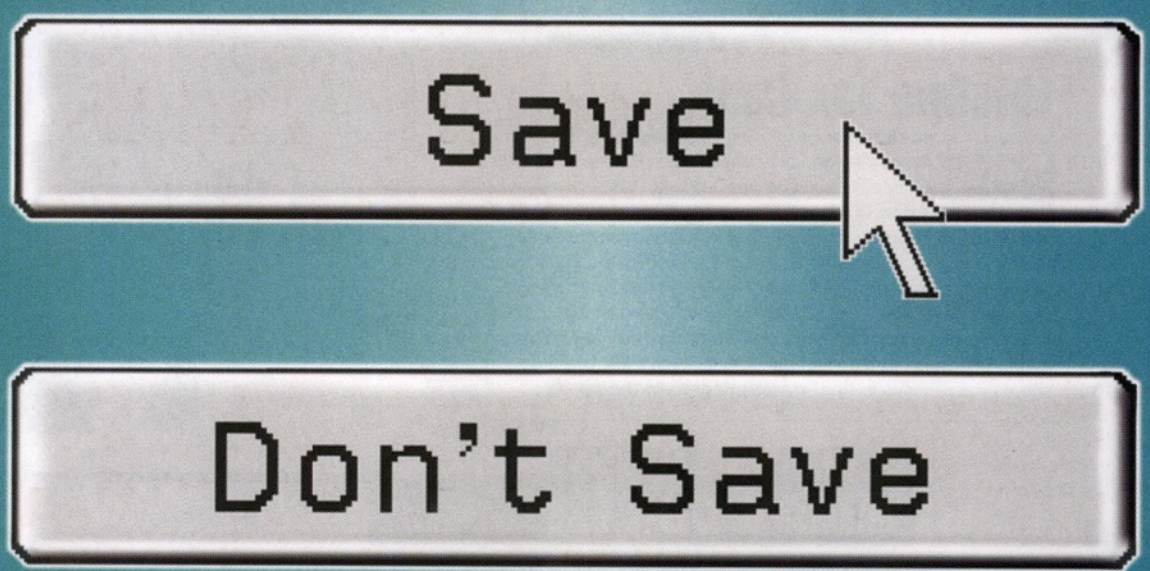
FIND A NEWSGROUP?

uk.finance
Discussion and advice on a whole variety of topics, including tax.

GET CHATTING?

investor.msn.com
Join in the Microsoft money fun.

first-e pays 6.51%[AER*], other banks don't – you choose.



The independent internet bank, first-e, exists only on the internet. So we can offer a return of 6.51%[AER*] interest paid gross every month, with no tax deductions. Open a first-e account, and you'll save time as well as money. Click on and you'll be with us in a few minutes.

first-e the internet bank | the independent internet bank | www.first-e.com

*INTRODUCTORY BONUS RATE OF INTEREST VALID UNTIL 30.04.00. AER – (Annual Equivalent Rate) – A notional rate that illustrates the gross rate as if paid and compounded on an annual basis. The gross contractual rate is the same as the AER. Interest subject to variation. Rate correct as at 05.11.99. Interest is calculated at 0.81% above the first-e base rate. The first-e base rate is 5.50% as at 05.11.99. This offer applies for balances up to £250,000. For balances above this amount please contact us directly. Interest is paid monthly gross of tax provided you have completed the required declaration. Standard transfers normally take 3 days to complete. "first-e the internet bank" is a trademark used by Banque d'Escompte for banking services on the internet. Banque d'Escompte is a French bank, incorporated as a limited liability company, with a paid up capital of 37,500,000 euros (Paris Companies Register No B 702 950 148). Registered Office: 13 Boulevard Haussmann, 75009 Paris, France.

The healers

ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE If you're tired of waiting for hours at your GP, why not try something different?

Alternative Health News Online

www.altmedicine.com ★★★★

A useful little number: fast and easy-to-use, with excellent Health News Bulletins which include papers from *The British Medical Journal*, and a test to see if you're addicted to caffeine (and who isn't?). The best section, though, is the curiously-named Ask Dr Blonz, where you can post a query and a doctor of nutrition will respond.

Alternative Medicine Digest

www.alternativemedicine.com ★★★★

'The Internet's Largest Database of Alternative Medicine' shouts the home page of this, the cyber version of the magazine. It's certainly large, with masses of searchable information on ailments, treatments and remedies. There's a free newsletter for subscribers, and the health news section is updated weekly. Open wide and say aaah...

The Apothecary

www.apothecary.co.uk ★★★

Everything you ever needed (or wanted) to know about homeopathy on a simple, clear site from this Yorkshire-based practice. It should be visited, if only for the fantastic names of the products – like the wonderfully titled Nux Vom for hangovers, which is sure to cheer you up. Remedies for loads of common complaints can be ordered online.

'Just scream if it hurts...'

The Hale Clinic

www.haleclinic.com ★★★

One of Princess Diana's favourite hangouts, London's top complementary medicine centre offers a number of therapies and has irrigated more famous colons than we would care to contemplate. Its Web site is a good, if slightly basic, resource for learning exactly what alternative therapies involve, and which treatments will help certain ailments. Typical content includes information on the Buteyko Method, a revolutionary breathing technique for asthma sufferers.

Hale and hearty

Alternative Medicine: an online hit

The Health Shop

www.thehealthshop.co.uk ★★★

Good value alert – top brand vitamins and supplements at excellent prices lurk here, some up to 55 percent off the normal retail price, and with free delivery. The Health Shop also has listings of health farms and spa hotels for fitness holidays, as well as an

The side effects were rarely mentioned

Natural Health Consultants

www.naturalhealthconsult.com ★★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

Anyone who thinks complementary medicine is just for cranks hasn't seen this site, a fantastic information resource for pretty much any alternative health issue. The database is terrific – a quick search for 'insomnia' came up with 21 articles and reports. The site's speciality is getting hold of breakthrough products before they are widely available (Microhydrin, anyone?). There's also an excellent news section, and links to therapy centres and even a political health lobbyist. You're bound to leave here feeling informed, if not better.

WORDS: VICTORIA WILLIAMS; PICTURES: SCIENCE PHOTO LIBRARY, REX, RETNA

Buy Three DVDs. Get One Free.

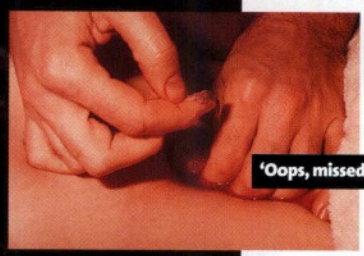
Buy any three of the top 100 DVDs and get one Free. Free Delivery Worldwide. 20% Discount on all Pre-orders.

www.blackstar.co.uk

the UK's biggest video store

Gallery Chat Shop Video Audio Shockwave Links

'Just like that...'


'Oops, missed'

Optimum Health Organisation

www.optimumhealth.org

★★

Been wondering what all the fuss is about over wheatgrass? Then come here – this site promotes detox courses for those wishing to get more in touch with their bowels. Despite the California-speak pervading much of the writing to be found here (Cindi from Iowa experienced 'a deep, even, balanced energy' from 'the core of my being'), there are some impressive testimonials.

Synergy Health and Well-Being Resources

www.futurepace.ndirect.co.uk

★★★★

Looking for a Reiki expert in the Midlands? Then check out this site for lists of alternative practitioners. The shopping section has various new products claiming miraculous benefits – including Hawaiian Noni Juice, which seems to be the cure for just about any health problem in one bottle.

outstanding Classifieds section, where you can look for almost any kind of alternative therapist in your area. Finally, there's a fat calculator: enter your vital statistics and it'll tell you just how tubby you actually are. Not recommended for the faint-hearted.

They're not laughing now

Natural Veterinary Pharma-ceuticals

www.natural-vet.com

★★★

It's not just humans who benefit from alternative medicine. There's not a lot of excitement here, but there are lots of products aimed at energising the pooch in your life. It even claims to be able to sort out mutt-related antisocial problems – they have cures for both dog-breath and drooling.

McKenna: 'love enhancer'

THE ALTERNATIVE ALTERNATIVE

The soul man

Tried everything, and still can't find what ails you? Perhaps it's time for some spiritual cleansing. Scotsman Steven Layton was directed to open the Xenon Centre (*members.aol.com/xenonctr/index*) during a 'Vision Quest', and now helps to straighten you out using such treatments as rebirthing (in case you didn't get it right first time) and crystal healing. The centre also offers Shamanism courses and Goddess workshops. So head to Kirkcaldy for spiritual rebirth, and *please* try not to get your soul dirty again.

'We're closed'

best health sites ★★★★★

where can I...

Hypnosis.com

www.hypnosis.com

★★★★

A whopping great resource for those with an interest in the strange world of hypnotherapy, with a mailing list you can join to receive regular doses of information. More advanced (and therefore more perplexing) hypnosis techniques like Time Line Therapy™ are also patiently explained. There's a lively discussion forum, debating such topics as 'Hypnosis as a love enhancer', as well as links to other hypnotherapy sites, and places to buy books on the subject.

Stock up on winter supplies at www.auravita.com

GET AN ONLINE DIAGNOSIS?

www.mayo.edu

Tell your fears to the resident doctor and have them laid to rest.

www.pathfinder.com/drweil

The most celebrated online doctor answers your health worries.

FIND OUT ABOUT PREGNANCY?

www.ukmums.co.uk

Everything you could want to know about bringing up baby.

www.babycenter.com

Masses for mums-to-be.

BUY HEALTH SUPPLIES?

www.auravita.com

New online vitamin store.

www.remedy-zone.com

All manner of health remedies.

FIND AN OFFICIAL HEALTH SITE?

www.bma.org.uk

Info on becoming a doctor, plus links.

www.doh.gov.uk/nhsexec/direct.htm/

Healthcare help via NHS Direct.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

misc.health.alternative

Everything that there is to know about the topic of alternative remedies.

JOIN A MAILING LIST?

For loads of information join the acupuncture list at

www.teleport.com/~acudetox/NADA/acu-l.shtml

GET CHATTING?

www.caloriecounter.co.uk

Support and advice for dieters from those who are also off the cakes.

Looking for more Health sites? Turn to Need To Know on page 108

shops ON THE NET

thousands of shops...
...millions of products

FREE

for retailers to list &
shoppers to browse
and buy

Freephone
0800 316 7200

www.sotn.co.uk

1999 sponsors of Christmas Direct
www.christmasdirect.co.uk

CHRISTMAS DIRECT

TRUST on-line

Eat your heart out, Beeton!

RECIPES Not sure what to whip up for dinner this evening? Then check out these online databases

'But I feel fi... urk!'

Aunt Emma's Recipe World

web-star.com/Recipes/RecipeMenu.html ★★★

It's not actually clear who Aunt Emma is, but with a reassuring name like that anyone would trust her to provide recipes for easy-to-cook, good, wholesome food. And that's what she does. It's very American – check out all the 'Super Bowl' dishes – but still very useful. For a fun evening, we reckon that Blow Me Down Tea and the promising St Patrick's Day Quickie are definitely must-cooks.

Cooking by Computer

www.cbyc.com ★★★

If you're tired of baked beans on toast and hanker after something a touch more exotic, this is the site for you. The Hawaiian, Middle Eastern and Indian recipes (among others) presented here might look complicated, but most are actually dead easy; if you get really stuck you can always post a message on the board for the recipe for Czech Christmas Cookies (or something). Whatever, the food is sure to impress a potential beau more than fish and chips.

Linda McCartney's pies did have a use after all

best food & drink sites ★★★★★ where can I...

BUY WINE ONLINE?

www.winecellar.co.uk

Hang out at the Parisian café-style high street offie on the Net.

www.winescape.co.uk

Wines of the world at affordable prices. Attractive and useable.

LEARN ABOUT GENETICALLY MODIFIED FOOD?

www.greenpeace.org/~geneng/

Learn how to avoid genetic foods, and where to protest...

www.foodbiotech.org/

...then take a look at the opposite side of the argument.

GET THE LATEST FOOD NEWS?

www.foodchannel.com

Get all the lowdown on new tastes, and find yourself an eaterie.

www.winedine.co.uk/

Ezine focusing on food, drink and travel features.

Bone up on drinking at The Virtual Bar

CURE MY HANGOVER?

www.TheVirtualBar.com

Some useful cures, plus a drinking glossary and bar tricks.

www.wrecked.co.uk

Just one look at this drinking prevention page and you'll never touch a drop again.

BUY INGREDIENTS ONLINE?

www.tesco.co.uk/indexn.htm

The most innovative of the big online supermarkets, offering 'aisle cruising' and extra Clubcard points.

www.Groceries.org.uk

Finds the best and cheapest food for you, then has it delivered to your door.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

alt.food

Anything and everything to do with the wide world of food. Take a look at alt.food.low-fat for a fat-free version.

FIND A COOL RESTAURANT?

www.london-restaurants.com

Find a restaurant in the capital without spending the earth.

www.restaurants.co.uk

Search the country for an eatery, or visit one of the site's recommendations.

JOIN A MAILING LIST?

To join the recipes list, send an email with 'subscribe recipes' in the message to ***majordomo@listserv.prodigy.com***

GET CHATTING?

www.fareshare.net

Exchange tried and tested favourite recipes by participating in the chat rooms.

Meals For You

www.mealsforyou.com ★★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

OK, you've got 12 people coming for dinner – two are vegetarians, one is a vegan, four are on diets and one simply *won't* touch seafood. What do you do? Head for Meals For You, a fantastic recipe database that is guaranteed to assist with any culinary dilemma. Search through the thousands of recipes by category (including diabetic and kosher), ingredients, nutritional content or by gadget – handy if you've only got a microwave. And tell the site how many are coming to dinner and it'll alter the quantity of ingredients accordingly. The only thing it can't do is stop you burning your dish to a crisp...

Salad Recipes.com

saladrecipes.com ★★★★

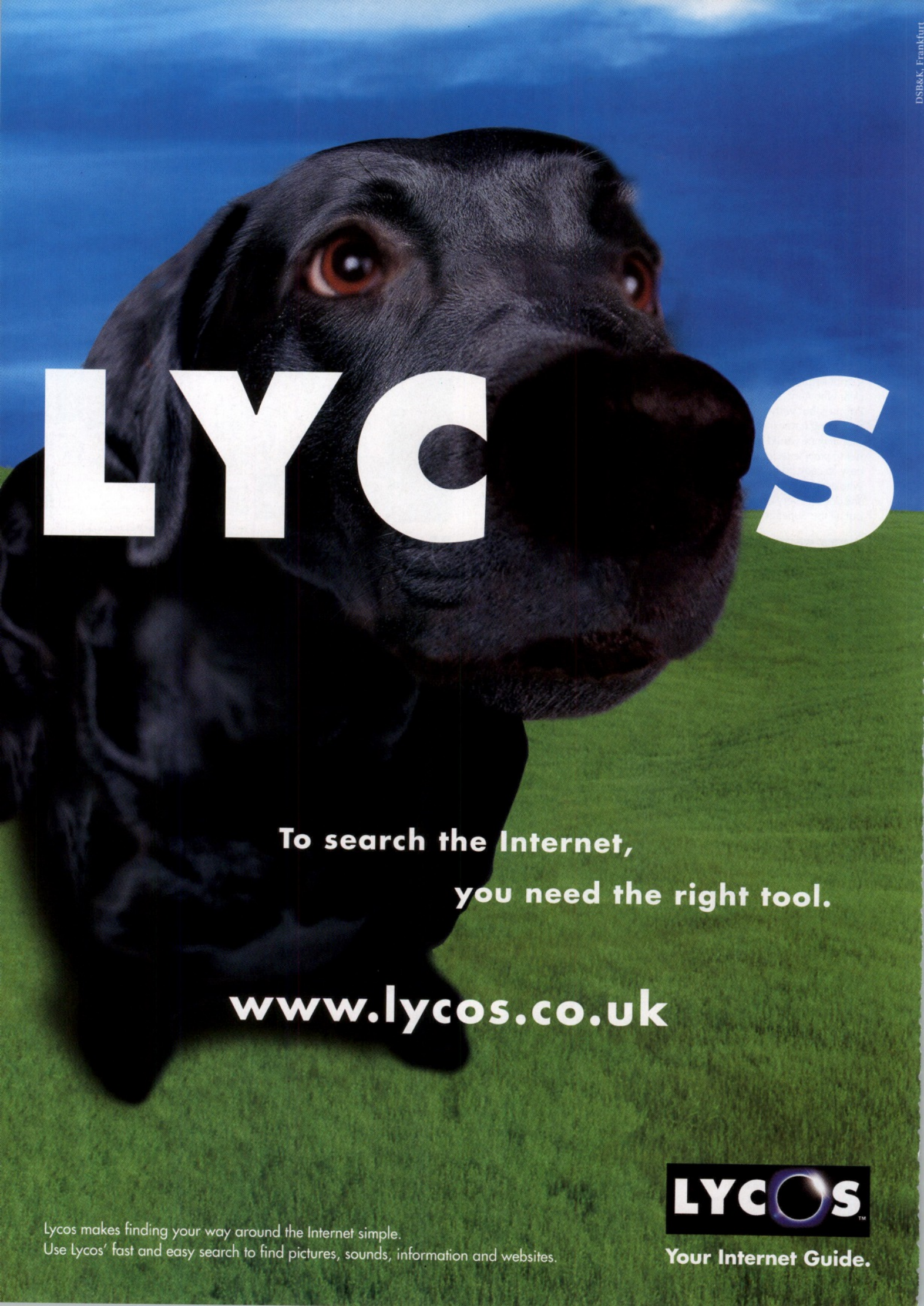
Shame on you if you thought that salads consisted of one piece of limp lettuce and a warm cherry tomato – this site proves there is more to the not-so-humble dish. Play recipe roulette to see what salad it suggests for you – I'm having the intriguing Strawberry Spinach Salad III for tea tonight. Some of the names are a bit odd – and it might be best to give the Frog Eye Salad (coconut and marshmallows) a wide berth.

Utterly Outrageous Recipes

www.zapitalism.com/zap/food.html ★★★★

Everyone has a weird food fetish they keep hidden, and this site is the place to reveal them – kind of an Alcoholics Anonymous for those who like odd food combinations. 'Don't knock it till you've tried it!' proclaims the site; but given that the recipes on the site include Cricket Cookies (yes, real crickets – with chocolate chips) and Rootworm Beetle Dip, we'll just knock it, if it's all the same...

WORDS: SARAH WAKELY; PICTURES: SCOPE, HULTON DEUTSCH



DSB&K, Frankfurt

Tommy had a surprise for the sleeping canary

'And for my next trick...'

WORDS: ROBERT JEFFERY; PICTURES: MOVIESTORE COLLECTION, REX, SYGMA

TRICKERY Amaze your friends, earn free pints, maybe even graduate to a zooful of white tigers... now that's magic!

Allmagic

allmagic.com ★★★★

If you can find your way round this weekly mag/portal, you'll already have earned your entry to the Magic Circle, but persevere with it: inside are plenty of links, free tips and, best of all, video clips of magicians in action on US television shows (follow the link to the 'Magic Theater').

Card Trick Central

web.superb.net/cardtric/ ★★★★

More card tricks than you can shake a wand at apparently, though not any old Paul Daniels wannabe can wander into the advanced section – the beginner's stuff will be quite enough to bamboozle you for weeks. Steve McQueen had the right idea about this cards nonsense – he won money and didn't have to wear a big pointy hat to do so.

Magic Interactive

www.magic-interactive.com

★★★★

If your magical ambitions extend no further than keeping a roomful of raucous four-year-olds quiet for 10 minutes without resorting to the cane, you won't be needing Magic Interactive. If, on the other hand, you're serious about wizardry as a full-time profession, make this a bookmark. Quite apart from the dazzling array of tricks (which, inevitably, get better when you cough up for membership), there's also a bulletin board, a magic directory and a selection of gags to spice up your routine.

MagicLand

magicland.virtualave.net

★★★★★

A nice place to start if you don't know a Mobius strip from a magic knot. MagicLand guides you through the basics – including exercises to perfect the sleight of hand so essential to the magician's art – with the particular plus point of never revealing the secrets of a trick unless you specifically ask for them. Check out sister site ***fly.to/cardland*** as well.

Magic Tricks

www.conjuror.com/magictricks

★★★

'Remember, a magician never tells how,' warns this repository of magical information, before doing just that. Whether it's cards, coins or silly bits of rope that tickle your magical fancy, it'll be here – and you won't have to pay a cent. The main site throws FAQs, a shop and history into the heady mix.

PBDM Magic Cyber Theater

www.pbdm.com/video/theatre.html

★★★

What better way to learn the tricks of the trade than to watch somebody else doing them? Dozens of tricks are archived here as Real Video files, including a 1914 recording of Houdini locking a woman

Daniels wowed the Orange lodge

The Magician's Corner

www.tmc.ndo.co.uk ★★★★★

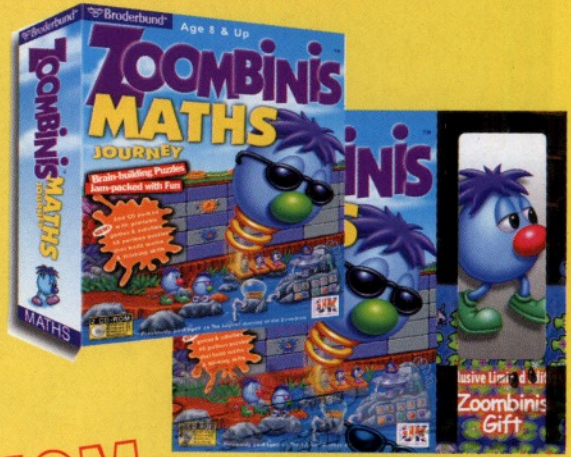
thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

Getting secrets from a magician is about as easy as getting the truth from a politician – most sites will only allow you access to the good stuff by answering questions of the 'which brand of saw is most effective for severing audience members' limbs?' variety. How refreshing, then, to come across a site that's only too happy to spill its guts for the public: The Magician's Corner gives not only card tricks and basic conjuring acts, but also handy tips on performing for an audience, magic news, a potted history and links. Go on, pick a card, any card...

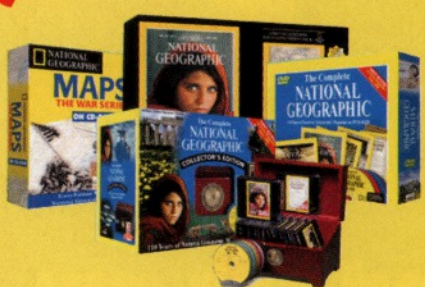
Bobbitt's fantasies grew ever more elaborate

IdeasforChristmas.com

For late shoppers, here's some ideas for Christmas...



IDEASFORCHRISTMAS.COM



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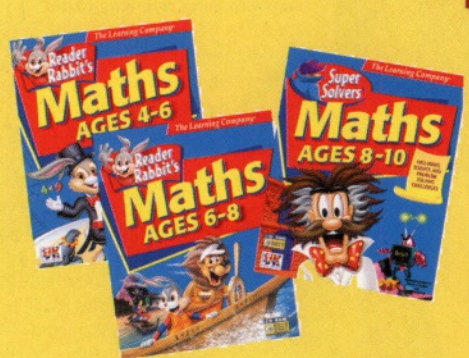

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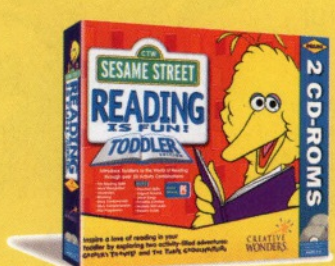

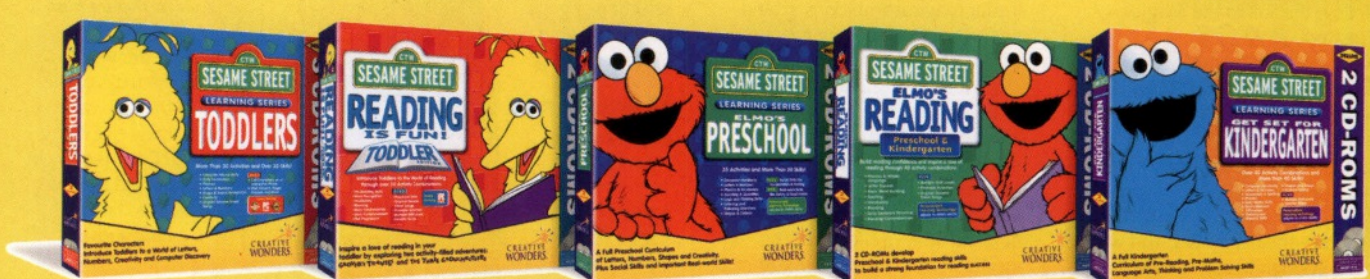

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The magician cull came to a close

upside down in a glass tank full of water. Remember: trying this at home may lead to prosecution.

Purely Magic

www.purelymagic.com ★★★★

Aaron Smith's a nice fella: he's put his secrets online in a Delia Smith-type way for us to enjoy (and, like the rotund cook, he's trying to flog books as well). Still, there's a healthy selection of free tips among the corporate nonsense, and a useful links page too.

Show Theatre.com

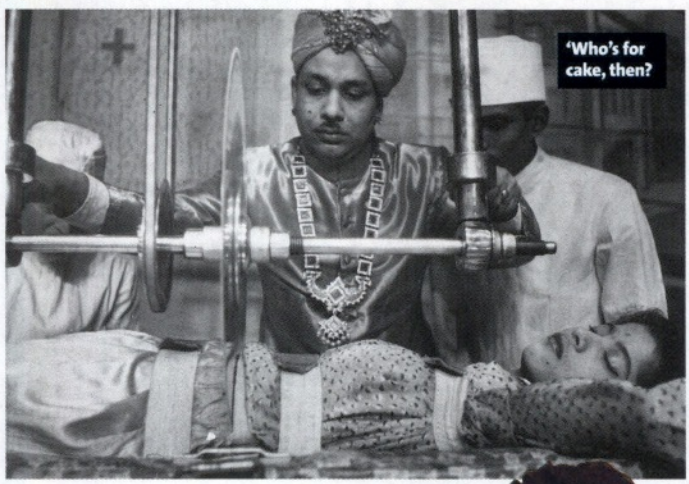
www.showtheatre.com/ShowTheatre ★★

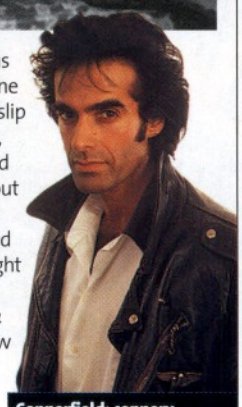
Ever wondered what the misguided, long-haired scientist from *The Fast Show* gets up to when not on telly? Well, his name's Howard, and he spends his time introducing magic tricks in a whiny tone on this showcase site. When you stop laughing, you might learn something.

The Carrandoes And Henry The Dog

www.stage1.demon.co.uk ★★

You'll want a role model to aspire to as you advance towards the inner circle. And who better than Lincolnshire's Leading International Family Entertainers? This delightful couple give us their act online and jokes to slip into routines, including: 'Did you hear about the crab that got drunk and walked straight home?' Step aside Penn & Teller, the new kids have arrived in town.


'Who's for cake, then?


Copperfield: coppery

best learning sites ★★★★★

where can I...

LEARN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE?

www.travlang.com
70 languages, all learnable online, with full dictionaries.
www.learnplus.com
Spanish and German tuition. Initial lessons are free.
www.ild.com
It costs to learn here, but the Audio samples are a useful extra.
www.ipl.org/youth/hello
Learn 30 important languages free.

LEARN A USEFUL SKILL?

www.how2.com
Tells you how to do almost anything in an easy-to-understand way.
educationunlimited.co.uk
Another facet of the *Guardian* site; impressive on IT in general.
www.premier-pages.co.uk/investor
Become a financial whizz with this useful beginners' guide to markets.
www.lawrights.co.uk
Know your legal rights and draw up documents online.

FIND LEARNING RESOURCES?

www.schoolsnet.com
Portal with lesson details.
www.topmarks.co.uk
Help with work, on 100s of topics.
www.searchgate.co.uk
Directory of learning links.

Don't know how to do it? You'd better ask www.how2.com without further ado

www.bjpinchbeck.com
The famous homework helper.

LEARN OVERSEAS?

www.eeop.com
Learning for adults in Europe and US.
www.ribi.org/yex/
School exchange programmes.
www.dfee.gov.uk
Helpful advice from the Government.
www.britishcouncil.org
Can help place you overseas.

LEARN WITHOUT SCHOOL?

www-icdl.open.ac.uk
The Open University – enough said.
learning.channel4.com
Resource for home learners age 4-19.
www.tele-school.org
Learn online, and interact as well.
www.nec.ac.uk
Help and links for distance learners.

FIND A NEWS GROUP?

alt.magic
Learn the secrets, buy the kit.

JOIN A MAILING LIST?

Send a message marked 'subscribe ENGLED-L' to ***listserv@lists.psu.edu*** to discuss British education.

GET CHATTING?

www.magictalk.com
The official discussion group for magicians.

HOW'S TRICKS?

YOU'LL LIKE THIS – NOT A LOT...

One of the simplest card tricks for a beginner is posted at ***magicland.virtualave.net***. Simply take a fresh pack and turn the bottom card over. Then invite an audience member to cut the pack, draw a card and memorise it. While they're occupied, subtly turn the pack upside down. Ask them to slide their card back into the pack, then turn your back, flip the top card back over and hey presto! – their card is a different way round to all the others, thus enabling you to produce it in front of your astonished subject. Staffers at *the net* were reduced to gibbering wrecks of wonderment when our office guinea pig tried it one quiet afternoon. If Claudia Schiffer's reading this, the number's at the front of the magazine...

It's better than the '11-finger' trick anyway: count the fingers on one hand – '10-9-8-7-6' – and then claim that 'plus another five makes eleven,' so you *must* have 11 fingers. Unsurprisingly, 'It works best with children.'

'Put 'em away and fetch another bottle of Beaujolais, will you'

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You Pokewhat?

PLASTIC Another month, another toy craze – but why is Pokemon making kids clear the shelves?

Pokemon Express

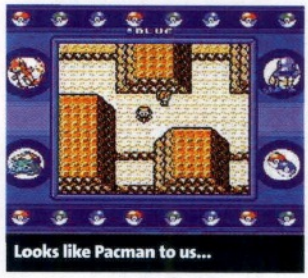
homepages.go.com/~destroyer_x/default.htm ★★★★★

Even allowing for its gaudily coloured subject matter this is far from the prettiest site in the world, but it *is* paying homage to Pokemon – which began life as a computer game; and is now en route to world domination. Gen up here: Pokemon Express covers all (and we mean *all*) the areas – news on single releases (don't ask), email updates, the endless variations of the game, the cartoon, and the ominously-titled *Pokemon: The First Movie*... Exhaustive, and a tad exhausting.

Pikachu's Pokemon Centre

www.geocities.com/TimesSquare/Chamber/4798/ ★★★★

Warning: strictly for those with cast-iron constitutions. If you can stomach the visual assault (pink abounds) and the constant! exclamation! marks! this ultra-cutesy site from two girlies (who call themselves Yellowfurball and Bluefluff) provides a wealth of information on all platforms of the Pokephenomenon. It also – joy of joys – has a hoard of Pokie icons for you to download.


Looks like Pacman to us...

Pokemon Terror Trainer

www.hecklers.com/terrortrainer/index.html ★★★★

It might come as a surprise to learn that not everyone loves Pokemon. Those who don't should tune in here for a jolly little Shockwave game which allows you to lure Pikachu, the yellow fellow with the zigzag tail, to a variety of unsavoury deaths. Worryingly satisfying.

Clefable's Pokemon Site

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

www.clefable.com ★★★★★

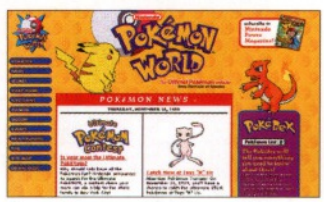
From the Cheat Planet site – a compendium of hints and tips for various gaming platforms – comes this highly-organised (if curiously-named) site. It's well laid out and attractive, even if the font is a bit small and will therefore destroy whatever eyesight Pokemon fans have left after squinting at tiny screens and watching television for weeks at a time.

Feltz never could control her kids

Pokemon World

www.pokemon.com ★★★

Critics (and there are many) have attacked the lucrative Pokemon industry for encouraging acquisitiveness among kids. The labyrinthine official site proves the point beyond doubt; it's little more than a catalogue where everything is priced and ready to buy. There are comics, videos, games, sheet music and, of course, the figures in question – unless they've been withdrawn to bump up their value (surely they wouldn't do something so calculated?).



best kids' sites ★★★★★ where can I...

FIND KIDS' TV FAVOURITES?

www.bbc.co.uk/education/teletubbies/

'Educational' is up for debate.

www.ctw.org/sesame/

The official site with 101 things to do.

BUY TOYS ONLINE?

www.toysrus.co.uk

Easy access to brand-name toys.

www.etoys.co.uk

Great-looking new toy retail site.

FIND IDEAS FOR DAYS OUT?

www.bbc.co.uk/ukok/

The BBC guide to holiday fun.

www.timeout.com/london/hitlist/children.html

Reviews of events in all major cities.

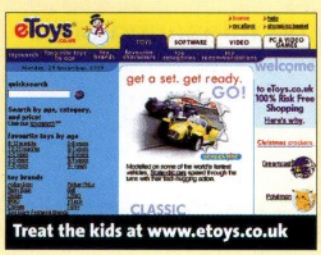
FIND BEDTIME STORIES?

www.home-office-mall.com/bedtime-story/

Tales you can print and take home with you.

www.bedtimebooks.com

Useful and varied site for online books for kids.



Treat the kids at www.etoys.co.uk

FIND WEB SITES FOR TEENAGERS?

www.teen-scene.com

Forums and links.

www.teen-net.com

An innovative teen portal.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

alt.games.pokemon

Discuss the yellow freaks in detail.

JOIN A MAILING LIST?

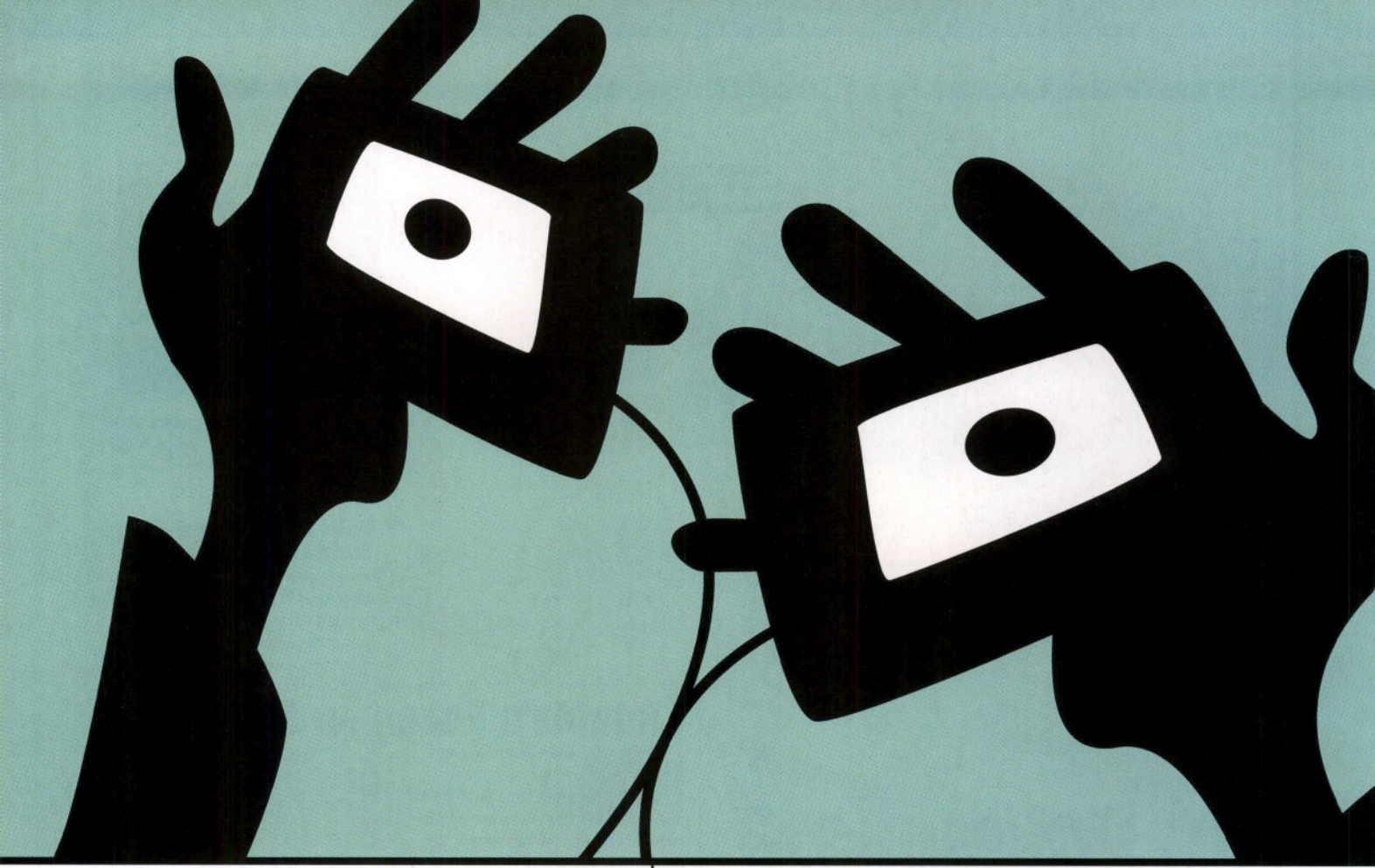
To discuss 'creative, non-coercive parenting', email ***listserv@listserv.aol***.

GET CHATTING?

www.geocities.com/Area51/Quasar/7057/index.html

Talk to fellow Pokémon enthusiasts.

WORDS: GARY PARKINSON; PICTURES: NICK WRIGHT



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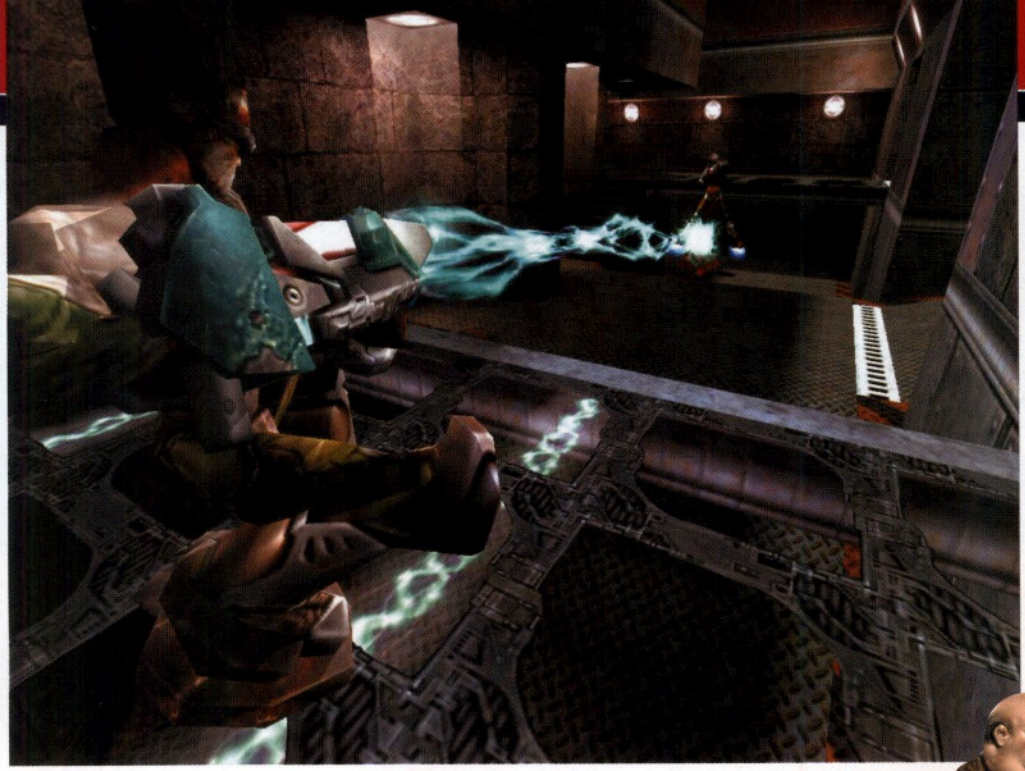
At the touch of a button, you can play and own tracks to suit you - absolutely Free.

For the best Music go to...

www.peoplesound.com



Ma, I just can't stop a killin'

QUAKE It's the game that stopped a generation going outdoors. And now there's Quake 3. Good Lord!

Blue's News

www.bluesnews.com ★★★★★

If it's happening in online gaming, then Blue's News covers it. It's the main competition for Stomped, and to be honest which you prefer is just a matter of taste. We regularly visit both of them. Blue's News has some great in-depth articles, features about the games and a surprisingly interesting readers' letters page – which is nice if you can tear yourself away from the action.

GameSpy3D

www.gamespy3d.com/ ★★★★★

No amount of Red Bull can match the adrenaline rush of playing Quake against 15 like-minded sadists over the Net. This utility seeks out the most exciting Death Matches and will throw you into the mayhem. GameSpy makes it so easy it's hard to say no to the $20 registration fee.

Gazza's really let himself go recently

Headshot's Map Depot

headshot.terrafusion.com/ ★★★★

For some people, playing the game is just not enough. For those with too much time on their hands, the ability to create maps for Quake and Quake 2 and then disseminate their fiendish creations over the Net is just as important. Headshot's additions to the canon include Bless To Kill for Quake, and Vascular for Quake 2 – there's nothing for the third instalment yet, but watch out.

id Software

www.idsoftware.com ★★★★

id Software was (ir)responsible for creating Quake, and for starting the whole first person-perspective shooting craze with Doom. Whether you're a Quake virgin or you've spent hours honing your fragging skills in your bedroom and want to try it online against real people, then this is a great place to start – all the files and know-how are right here.

QGirlZ

www.qgirlz.com ★★★★★

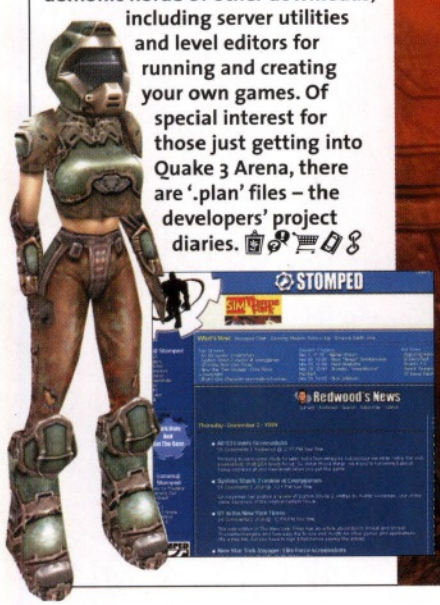
With all this death and mayhem, surely Quake is no place for a fragile girl. But unreconstituted males beware, there's a host of women out there who'd like nothing better than to blow

Stomped

www.stomped.com ★★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

Stomped is the ultimate Quake resource. If it has something to do with the three games, then it's here. There are Mods, Bots, movies and a demonic horde of other downloads, including server utilities and level editors for running and creating your own games. Of special interest for those just getting into Quake 3 Arena, there are '.plan' files – the developers' project diaries.



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The Famous Lookalikes

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New Band Spotlight

Readers' Forum Message Board

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Specials on CDs, Video, DVD

Buy Gig Tickets and Merchandise

Album Of The Week Specials

Record Search

Pre-Release Music Discounts

READ IT, SEE IT, HEAR IT

Ooh, headscarf and leather slacks. Nice.

you into thousands of tiny pieces – virtually, of course. If the clan likes you, you may get a mention in Whipping Boiz, but reading the entries this is a dubious honour.

Quake 3 Arena

www.quakearena.com ★★★

PC gamers have been looking forward to Quake 3 Arena in the same way that Fundamentalist Christians anticipate the Second Coming – like their salvation depended upon it. They've been playing Quake 2 for two years now, – in computer years, that's several dog's lives. Regular updates, blood-splattering screen shots and a downloadable demo have only added to the feeding frenzy.

Star Wars Quake

swtc.telefragged.com ★★★

A major factor in Quake's success is that the game engine (the main program) can be modified to create new games in the form of Mods or Total Conversions (TCs). There have been loads of TCs, both commercial releases and amateur jobs, but Star Wars Quake is possibly the most eagerly anticipated TC of the lot. The screenshots look fabulous, and the story engrossing; all we want now is the finished game – or even a demo – so we can get blasting.

The killer's tool kit: don't let the Law find this lot under your bed

HAZARDS OF MIDNIGHT FRAGGING

Quaker gets no oats

Not everybody loves Quake; some people positively hate the game. Take Cheryl, who has got so much time on her hands because of her Quake-obsessed boyfriend she operates a page with a great alternative guide to Quake – *www.angelfire.com/va/qutie3/noquake.html*. Or Jenn, who was so bitter about her guy's constant playing that even after she split with him she left this message up: 'Sorry ladies, but I don't have the Quake guy anymore! I have moved on to bigger and better things (and a guy who prefers *me* to a computer screen).'

Can you see the trend now, losers? If you're worried about your Quake addiction why not try out the Quake Purity Test at *www.iupui.edu/~mcox/purity.html* – but beware, you might find out some things about yourself you may not want to hear; and have a long lonely life ahead of you.

The Funny Quake Screenshots Page

screenshots.clanworld.org/ ★★★

Hmm, is that funny ha ha, or funny peculiar? To be honest it's not easy to tell from this motley collection of vaguely amusing screen shots, frankly worrying hand-drawn illustrations and rather good modified pictures. Although we're not really in a position to offer such advice, we do think that some of these people should get out once in a while.

Titanic Quake 2

www.planetquake.com/titanic/ ★★★★★

Unlike Total Conversions – where the Quake engine has been cannibalised to create a completely new game – Mods are bolt-on programmes that change Quake more subtlely. This Titanic Mod is one of many at Planet Quake – others include The Matrix and King of the Hill – so stand up at the bow and get shot of Kate. We promise you'll really feel like you're flying...

best games sites ★★★★★

where can I...

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www.game-retail.co.uk
Ten percent off marked games ordered online here.
www.gamesparadise.com
All the top games discounted.
www.gamesstreet.infront.co.uk
All the latest titles for all the formats.
www.softwarezone.co.uk
As well as all the latest formats you can buy games for your old Atari Jaguar or even the ill-fated Sega Mega CD 32X.

FIND GAMING NEWS?

www.gamesdomain.co.uk
Great news and game-related features on the ones that matter.
www.ign.com
Thorough worldwide games news.
www.uksn.com
Ideal for the dedicated sports sim freaks out there
www.barrysworld.com
Impressive site that keeps gamers bang up-to-date

FIND DEMOS?

www.happypuppy.com
The newest demos and shareware games, complete with a download database.
www.pczone. co.uk
Comprehensive reviews and demos.
www.3dfiles.com
Demos and shareware downloads of the latest and best games.
www.acdownload.com
Not the best looking site, but plenty of great downloads.

Step into the third dimension for all your demos and shareware downloads here at www.3dfiles.com

FIND HINTS AND CHEATS?

www.gamefaqs.com
A veritable encyclopedia of advice and secrets for your favourite games.
www.xcheater.com
The latest cheats for the newest games make their way here.
www.alienmoon.com
Dedicated to PlayStation and PC hints, cheats and complete walkthroughs.
totalgames.net
Hints and tips plus news, reviews and opinion.

PLAY GAMES ONLINE?

www.shockwave.com
Shocked games and cartoons – if you can't get animated here, there's no hope for you.
www.gameplay.co.uk
Britain's biggest and best online gaming.
www.gameszone.com
Free service covering gamers all over Europe.
www.theclq.com/main.asp
Forget Manchester United, this is the Real champions League... For Quake, that is.

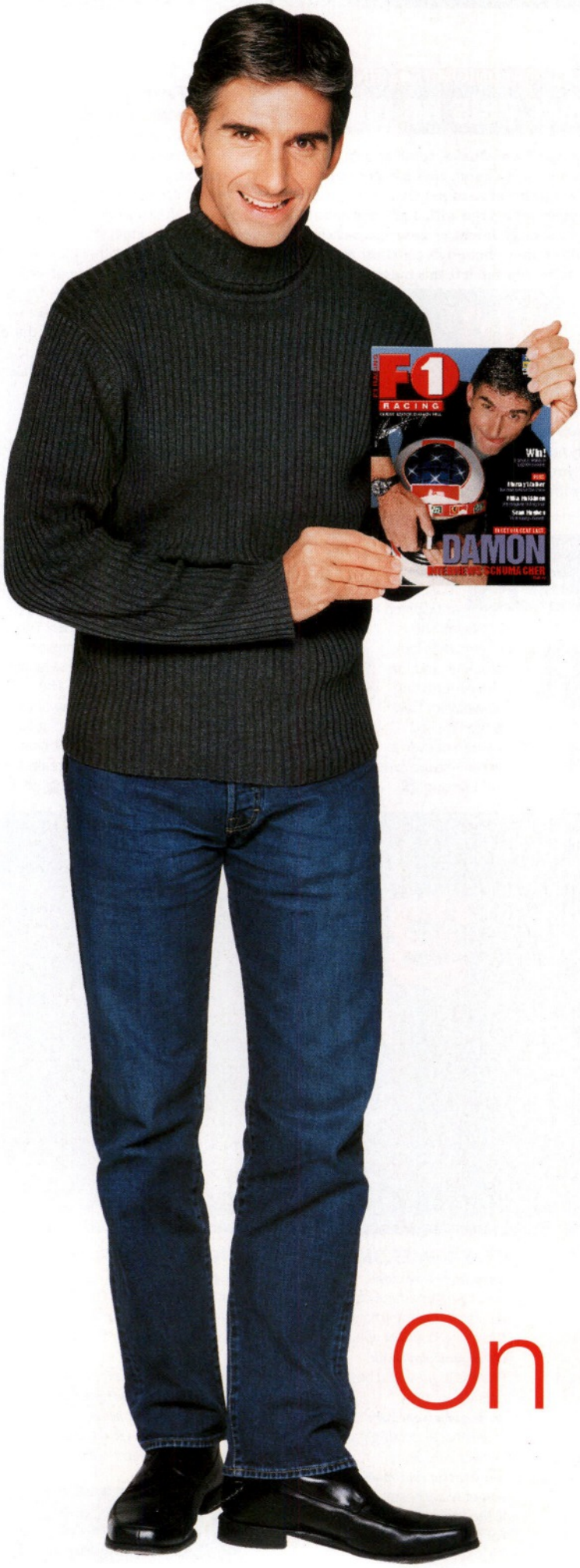
FIND A NEWSGROUP?

alt.games.quake3
Get the lowdown on the latest Quake incarnation and meet the like-minded.

GET CHATTING?

www.geocities.com/TimesSquare/Arcade/6469/chat.html
The best-known Quake chat room online. You'll need a silly alias to use it, though.

Looking for more Games sites? Turn to Need To Know on page 108



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- Mika Hakkinen's Eastern victory tour
- Damon's excellent desert adventure
- Murray: the man behind the voice

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Close up, Jackson's skin was quite spectacular

Stars in your eyes

WEB TELESCOPES NASA's billion-dollar Hubble Telescope may be dead to the world, but the Web will still let you make this hardware dance to your tune...

Bradford Robotic Telescope

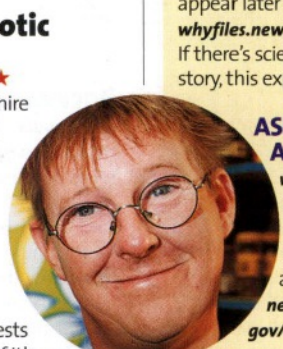
www.telescope.org ★★

Halfway up the Yorkshire Moors is the Bradford Robotic Telescope. Totally autonomous, the 46cm device 'decides' when conditions are okay, then picks up its instructions from a prioritised list of requests received via the Web. If it's clear, it'll take a snap. Judging by the skimpy gallery of images, it must be active one night a year.

Remotely Operated Telescope

www.deepspace.ucsb.edu/rot.htm ★★★

Boffins at the University of California in Santa Barbara have kindly mounted a sensitive digital camera on to a computer-controlled 35.6cm Celestron telescope, which students all around the globe can control without ever having to leave the comfort of their classroom. The results are excellent, but there is a catch – you'll have to be affiliated to a school before they'll let you have a go.



Curly: Astronomer, thespian and drunk

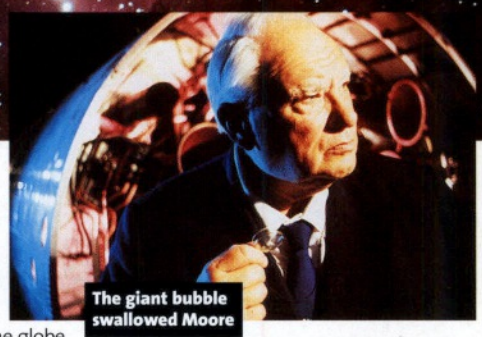
Iowa Robotic Telescope

denali.physics.uiowa.edu/IRO/ ★★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

The University of Iowa has wisely sited its Robotic Observatory well away from the cloudy mid-west, sticking it instead in the Arizona desert near the town of Sonoita. Fully automated, the 50cm reflector takes up to 10,000 images every year, and represents a serious piece of kit. Although it's primarily intended for university use, send in a request and you could be allotted up to 40 minutes of observation time. You'll need to know your stuff to fill in the request form, but there's plenty of help available to amateur stargazers on this excellent site.

for remote operation by members of the public. But judging by the forbidding usage and registration forms on the site, they'd rather you left it alone.



The giant bubble swallowed Moore

Nassau Station

astrwww.astr.cwru.edu/ ★★

Not Nassau in the Bahamas, but Nassau, Ohio. This 90cm reflector is operated by the Case Western Reserve University, and it's available

Eyes on the Skies

sunmilh.uml.edu/eyes/ ★★★★

If this country's miserable weather is getting you down, take a virtual trip to Livermore, California – home of Eyes on the Skies, a solar telescope you can control in real time. It's the next best thing to gazing at the sun – without the risk of permanent blindness. And if it's cloudy – or night-time – check out the magnificent movies of solar activity at the site's archive.

best science sites ★★★★★

where can I...

FIND SCIENCE NEWS?

www.eurekalert.org

Press releases of new inventions. Original sources of stories that will appear later elsewhere.

whyfiles.news.wisc.edu

If there's science behind a news story, this explains it all.

ASK AN EXPERT A QUESTION?

www.allexperts.com

Ask a question on absolutely anything and get a relevant answer.

newton.dep.anl.gov/aasquest.htm

10,000 Q&A database. If you have a new one, volunteers will answer it.

READ BOOK REVIEWS?

www.newscientist.com

Best place for new UK science book reviews. Top authors and critics.

www.sciam.com

Click on the 'Current Issue', then 'Reviews' for all the latest goodies.

Check on the latest discoveries at newscientist.com

GET AN UPDATE ON NASA?

www.nasa.gov

Links to everything from the latest Hubble pictures to Space Station reports.

www.reston.com/nasa/watch.html

A collection of reports about NASA.

GET HOMEWORK HELP?

www.schoolwork.org

Free, easy-to-use complement to the curriculum, by subject.

www.bjpinchbeck.com

Hundreds of links for every subject in this precocious site run by a 12-year-old swot in the US.

FIND A SCIENCE WEBCAM?

www.skyview.de/eng/start.htm

Control a telescope in Germany for five minutes and gaze at the stars.

eclipse.span.ch/liveshow.htm

Watch meteorological events, including eclipses and sunsets.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

sci.space.science

Get to the heart of the Milky Way.

JOIN A MAILING LIST?

The EXN News Bulletin is an excellent weekly round-up of science stories. Subscribe at ***exn.ca/science***.

GET CHATTING?

www.dry.net/~inworld/apps/Chat3D.html

Innovative '3D Space Chat': lets you walk around a virtual space station with fellow science freaks.

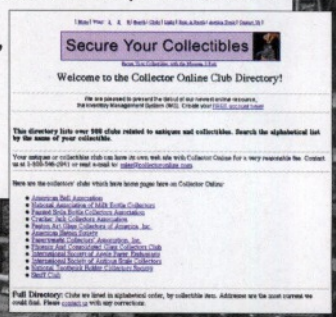
WORDS: MATTHEW BINGHAM; PICTURES: RETNA, REX, TONY STONE IMAGES

Collector Online

www.collectoronline.com/club-directory.shtml ★★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

'I'd like to know where all the strange ones go,' proclaimed Supergrass on their majestic debut album. Perhaps Gaz and his sideburned chums might like to visit Collector Online, where the sort of people normally mocked by small children in the street finally find acceptance among like-minded obsessives. Hundreds of different clubs and societies are listed and linked to here – and, while we can all understand the attraction of the James Bond Fan Club, who can possible explain the Chintz Collectors Club, Milk Bottle Collectors Incorporated or the Swizzle Stick Association?



'You threw *what* away?'

OBSESSIVES It's good to have a hobby – but some people just can't help taking it a little bit too far...

Air Sickness Bag Virtual Museum

www.airsicknessbags.com ★★★

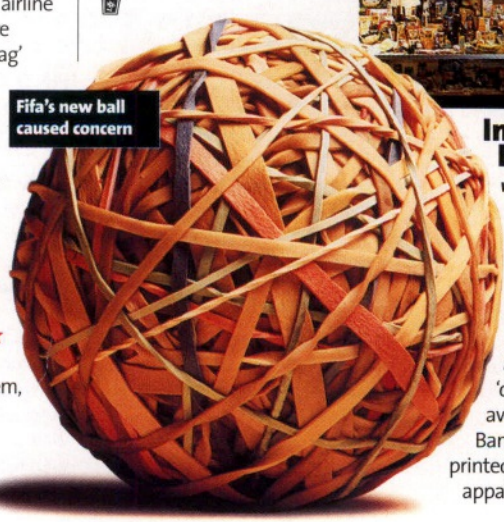
Fact: every year around a dozen people run amok with guns in North America. Fact: there are a dozen Web pages devoted to airline sick bags. A coincidence? Steve Silberberg's is the best 'barf bag' page (ironically, he's never been out the US; not surprisingly, he's single). Over 250 bags are here, listed by airline. Get a hankie ready for the tears of joy.

Antique And Art Glass Salt Shaker Collectors Society

www.cbantiques.com/ssc/ ★★

Yes, salt shakers. Not only do this lot hoard them, swap them, sell and (quite possibly) sleep with them, they even hold conventions to discuss salt shaker technology and meet with fellow devotees. Not that just anyone can join – you need antique shakers, not the plastic thing you nicked from that greasy spoon in Hemel Hempstead.

Nobody noticed the solitary prune


Fifa's new ball caused concern

International Banana Club

www.banana-club.com

★★★★★

While poor plums languish in oblivion, the humble banana has a club devoted to it; members earn entry to California's Banana Museum, and can work towards a 'doctorate in bananistry', awarded by the shadowy 'Top Banana'. Many members have it printed on their business stationery, apparently...

International Association of Calculator Collectors

www.bath.ac.uk/~masres/calcs.html

★★

One of the things about the advance of technology is it renders obsolete those items once considered essential. Why would anyone mourn the calculator when we have PCs? Find out all here.

Megaball

web.mouser.org/megaball/index.html

★★★

We've all constructed a pathetic rubber band ball during our lunch hour: the owner of this site has gone one better, however, wasting three years on a ball that now, at 13 pounds, is the biggest on the Internet (and sadly there are quite a few). Why did he start this dull project, pictures and stats of which are displayed here? Because he was bored...

The First Sugar Packet Club UK

web.ukonline.co.uk/Members/email.ukscsugar/ ★★★

Some people have too much time on their hands. Colin, Norman and Beryl are such people. Sugar packets remind them of holidays, apparently, though why this should require them to collect thousands is quite another matter. They've even been featured on *The Big Breakfast*, and they've got 100 members. Will the madness never end?

Pencil Sharpener Club

www.xs4all.nl/~gdlk/index.html

★★

Gemma got her first pencil sharpener some 28 years ago. She now has over 5000, and wants to share them with the world. She has a club open to fellow devotees – all

WORDS: ROBERT JEFFERY; PICTURES: IMAGEBANK

best weird sites ★★★★★

where can I...

FIND WEIRD NEWS?

www.joeha.com/whiteboard/
A collection of those silly little stories to email your mates.
www.tabloid.net
National Enquirer-style paper, which mixes truth and fiction.
members.aol.com/IACO70/wackynewz1.index.html
Everything and anything strange, from celebrities to little green men.
www.anorak.co.uk
Cataloguing the weirdest stuff from the British tabloids.

FIND THE REAL X-FILES?

www.seti-inst.edu
The world's top ET-hunters try to track down those little green men.
www.conspire.com
UFO files, plus conspiracy theories and other madness.
foia.fbi.gov/unusual.htm
Over 1600 pages of previously secret material from the FBI.
www.foia.ucia.gov
More grainy and indistinct documents from the US Government's dusty vaults.

LEARN ABOUT CULTS?

cti.itc.virginia.edu/~jkh8x/soc257/home.html
The maddest cults in the world, lovingly detailed for your perusal.
www.mayhem.net/crime/cults.html
Find out what happens when dangerous cults go over the edge.
www.factnet.org
Regular newsletter dedicated to tracking scary sects worldwide.
www.religioustolerance.org/destruct.htm
Get the lowdown on potentially dangerous cults before you join.

SEE WACKY WEBCAMS?

www.irelandseye.com/ghost/map.html
Try and spot a ghost in Ireland.
www.lochness.co.uk/livecam/
Watch Nessie in all her glory, without travelling all the way to Scotland.
www.jpl.nasa.gov/flower/
Watch the 'corpse flower' – which smells like burning flesh – bloom.
www.flyvision.org/sitelite/Houston/GhostWatcher
Webcams from some people who believe they might actually have ghosts or at least seen one.

CONSPIRE.COM

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Fancy a healthy does of paranoia? Point your browser to www.conspire.com

FIND OUT ABOUT AREA 51?

www.ufomind.com/area51/
A hefty resource on the secret base.
www.nauticom.net/users/ata/area51.html
Excellent site. Includes travel tips. Those guards can shoot to kill.
www.parascope.com/articles/1196/area1.htm
Find a photograph of the infamous black mailbox here.

FIND A CONSPIRACY THEORY?

www.disinfo.com
Conspiracies for the whole family.
www.4conspiracytheories.com
A wealth of conspiratorial links.
www.conspire.com
Sceptical tales with tongue placed firmly in cheek.
www.larouchepub.com
Very, very worrying indeed.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

alt.alien.research
Diverse discussion of all things alien.

JOIN A MAILING LIST?

Join the impressive UFO list from ***www.onelist.com/community/UFOR***

GET CHATTING?

www.isur.com
From those fascinating people at the Society For UFO Research.

125 members come from Belgium and Holland. And to think we want to join a currency with these people...

Unofficial Kinder Surprise

easyweb. easynet.co.uk/lympne/
★★
You remember them: flimsy, hollowed-out chocolate eggs sold at extortionate prices simply because they contained a plastic toy. Every toy ever made is chronicled here, ready to trade, sell or buy.
You'd expect this sort of behaviour from our American cousins, but to find it this side of the Atlantic is disturbing.

Virtual Corkscrew Museum

www.bullworks.net/virtual.htm ★★★★
To most of us, the corkscrew is merely a means to an end – that end being, with wearying inevitability, complete inebriation. To some, however, the corkscrew itself is far more important that the contents of the bottle it opens. In this, the world's foremost corkscrew shrine, you'll find not only information, pictures and links, but even video files of a large bearded man using his screws. Delightful.

CRAZY COLLECTORS

Join our club

If you thought the only things worth collecting were stamps and football stickers, think again. Right across the Web, (reasonably) ordinary Internet users are busy amassing stockpiles of the most bizarre items, among them: cheques, coffee grinders, irons, ashtrays, handcuffs, shoes, beer cans, soda-fountains, ties, keys, lunchboxes, sea-shells and pins. The excellent *www.wiredcollector.com* casts a critical eye over such lunatics and warns the public of disturbing new developments.

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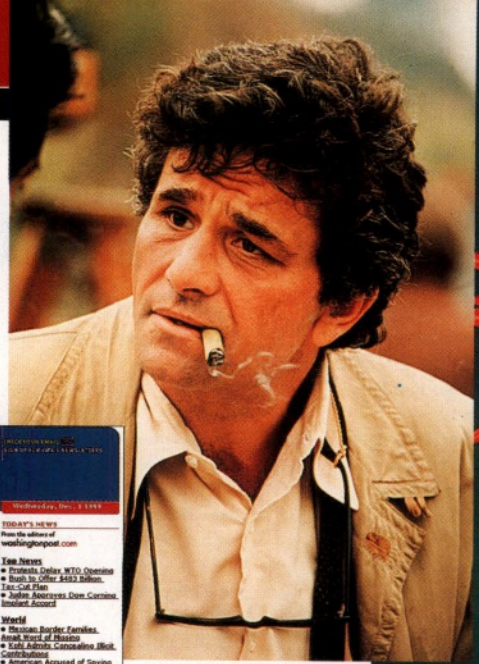
ENCYCLOPEDIAS Gullible Flipper couldn't say no

ENCYCLOPEDIAS Learn, learn, learn at www.britannica.com



GENEALOGY 'Anything more to go on than the name "Smith", ma'am?'

PICTURES: REX, TONY STONE IMAGES

The whole world

Whether you want to improve your love life, sort out your finances, spruce up your house or

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Citibank ***www.citibank.com/uk/***
Co-operative Bank ***www.co-operativebank.co.uk***
Direct Line ***www.directline.com***
Egg ***www.egg.co.uk***
First Direct ***www.firstdirect.co.uk***
First-e ***www.first-e.com***
Halifax ***www.halifax.co.uk***
Hamilton Direct ***www.hdb.co.uk***
HSBC ***www.banking.hsbc.co.uk***
LloydsTSB ***www.lloydstsb.co.uk***
Nationwide ***www.nationwide.co.uk***
NatWest ***www.natwest.co.uk***

STOCK EXCHANGES AND MARKETS

American ***www.amex.com***
Australian ***www.asx.com.au***
The Baltic Exchange ***www.balticexchange.co.uk***
Brussels ***www.stockexchange.be***
Hong Kong ***www.sehk.com.hk***
London ***www.londonstockex.co.uk***
New York ***www.nyse.com***
Swiss ***www.swx.ch***
Tokyo ***www.tse.or.jp/eindex.html***

CLASSIFIEDS

AdHunter ***www.adhunter.co.uk***
Economist Classifieds Market Place ***www.classified.economist.com***
Eureka-net ***www.eureka-net.co.uk***
Free Classified ***www.freeclassified.co.uk***
JJ Electronic Plaza Classifieds ***www.jjplaza.com/onlinead***
Localads ***www.localads.net***
London's Classifieds ***www.classifieds-free.net***
LOOT ***www.loot.com***
netTRADER ***www.nettrader.co.uk***
PhotoAds ***www.photoads.co.uk***
Photographic Ads ***www.nitehawk.com/iga/ads.html***
UK Personals ***www.uk-personals.net***

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ICQ ***www.icq.com***
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Microsoft ***www.microsoft.com/downloads/***
MP3 ***www.mp3.com***
Real Player ***www.real.com***
Shareware ***www.download.com***
ZDNet ***www.hotfiles.com***

ENCYCLOPEDIAS

Encarta ***encarta.msn.com***
Encyclopedia Britannica ***www.britannica.com***
Encyclopedia.com ***www.encyclopedia.com***
Funkandwagnalls ***www.funkandwagnalls.com***
Hutchinson Encyclopedia ***www.bt-ern.co.uk/helicon***

FOOD AND DRINK

Cooking Index ***www.cookingindex.com***
Food Channel ***www.foodchannel.com***
KitchenLink ***www.kitchenlink.com***
Meals.com ***www.meals.com***
Restaurants.co.uk ***www.restaurants.co.uk***
Room Service ***www.roomservice.co.uk***
Wine Spectator ***www.winespectator.com***

GAMES

GUIDES AND COMPANIES

Dreamcast ***www.dreamcast.com***
Future Games Network ***www.fgnetwork.com***
GameCenter ***www.gamecenter.com***
Game Daily ***www.gamedaily.com***
GameSpot ***www.gamespot.com***
GameSpyder ***www.gamespyder.com***
GameStats ***www.gamestats.com***
GA Source ***www.ga-source.com***
MacGaming ***www.maccentral.com/games***
MultiPlayer ***www.multiplayer.com***
Nintendo ***www.nintendo.com***
Playstation ***www.playstation.com***
Sega ***www.sega-europe.com***
Total Video Games ***www.totalvideogames.com***
Yahoo! ***games.yahoo.com***
Zone ***www.zone.com***

GENEALOGY

British Ancestral Research ***www.brit-a-r.demon.co.uk***
British Heraldic Institute ***www.kwtelecom.com/heraldry***
Family Search ***www.familysearch.com***
Genealogy for All ***www.excaliburknights.com/genealogy/***
Genealogy Research Source ***www.genealogy.bookpub.net***
Public Record Office ***www.pro.gov.uk***
Rootsweb ***www.rootsweb.com***

GOVERNMENT

BRITAIN

10 Downing Street ***www.number-10.gov.uk***
Arts Council ***www.artscouncil.org.uk***
Department for Culture, Media and Sport ***www.culture.gov.uk***
Department for International Development ***www.dfid.gov.uk***
Department of Health ***www.doh.gov.uk***
Department of the Environment, Transport and Regions ***www.detr.gov.uk***
MAFF – Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries & Food ***www.maff.gov.uk***
Ministry of Defence ***www.mod.uk***
Scottish Parliament ***www.scotland.gov.uk***
Welsh Assembly ***www.wales.gov.uk***

MEDICAL When horse chestnuts go bad

JOBS In his dreams, Les worked the door at Stringfellows

HEALTH Sites for all lard-arses – yes, *you*

at your desktop

just have a laugh, our monthly updated list of essential URLs will bring back the sparkle

THE WORLD

Australia ***www.fed.gov.au***
China ***www.gov.cn***
European Commission
europa.eu.int
France ***www.premier-ministre.gouv.fr***
Germany ***www.bundesregierung.de***
Russia ***www.gov.ru***
United Nations ***www.un.org***
United States
www.whitehouse.gov

HEALTH

DIETING

Fitness Online
www.fitnessonline.com
Light Living ***www.lightliving.com***
Three Fat Chicks
www.3fatchicks.com
WeightWatchers
uk.weightwatchers.com

DOCTORS & DIAGNOSIS

Ask Dr Weil
cgi.pathfinder.com/drweil/
Ask The Doc ***www.ask-the-doc.com***
British Medical Journal
www.bmj.com
Healthy Ideas
www.healthyideas.com
Intelihealth ***www.intelihealth.com***
Mayo Clinic ***www.mayo.edu***
MedRef ***www.medscout.com***
Mental Health
www.mentalhealth.com
Patient ***www.patient.co.uk***

SUPPORT & INFORMATION

Alcoholics Anonymous
www.alcoholics-anonymous.org
Alzheimer's Disease Society
www.alzheimers.org.uk
Cancer Bacup
www.cancerbacup.org.uk
Centre For Online Addiction
netaddiction.com
Diabetes UK ***www.diabetic.org.uk***
Don't Smoke ***www.dontsmoke.com***
HIV/AIDS Information & Links
www.brad.ac.uk/staff/ijhodgson/hivlinks.htm
National Autistic Society
www.oneworld.org/autism_uk
National Meningitis Trust
www.meningitis-trust.org.uk

HOMES

ESTATE AGENTS

Bushells ***www.bushells.com***
Chancellors ***www.chancellors.co.uk***
CityLet ***www.citylet.com***
Cluttons Daniel Smith
www.cluttons.com
Egerton ***www.egertonproperty.co.uk***
Friend & Falcke
www.friendandfalcke.co.uk
General Accident
www.gaproperty.co.uk
Goldschmidt Howland
www.goldschmidt-howland.co.uk
Hamptons ***www.hamptons.co.uk***
John D Wood ***www.johndwood.co.uk***
Knight Frank ***www.knightfrank.co.uk***
Strutt & Parker
www.struttandparker.co.uk
Winkworth ***www.winkworth.co.uk***

PROPERTY FINDERS

Accommodation Directory
www.accommodation.com
Byehome ***www.byehome.com***
HomeDirectory
www.homedirectory.com
Homefile UK ***www.homefileuk.co.uk***
Homepages ***www.homepages.co.uk***
Home to Home
www.home-to-home.co.uk
Home Sale ***www.home-sale.co.uk***
HouseNet ***www.housenet.co.uk***
Internet Property Finder
www.propertyfinder.co.uk
Lets Direct ***www.letsdirect.co.uk***
Property Sight
www.property-sight.co.uk
UK Property Gold ***www.ukpg.co.uk***

HUMOUR

Cyber Comedian
webtamers.com/comedian.html
Funny ***www.funny.co.uk***
JokeDepot ***www.jokedepot.com***
JokePost ***www.jokepost.com***
The Simpsons
www.foxworld.com/simpsons
South Park
www.comedycentral.com
Uproar ***www.uproar.com***
Useless Pages
www.go2net.com/internet/useless

JOBS

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JOB SEARCHES

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Gradunet ***www.gradunet.co.uk***
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Jobsearch UK ***www.jobsearch.co.uk***
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MonsterBoard ***www.monster.co.uk***
Overseas Jobs
www.overseasjobs.com
Personnelnet
www.personnelnet.com
WorkWeb ***www.workweb.co.uk***
Yelcom ***www.yelcom.com***

KIDS

0-8

Bedtime stories
www.home-office-mall.com/bedtime-story
Disney Channel
www.disneychannel.co.uk
FunSchool ***www.funschool.com***
Kidscom ***www.kidscom.com/orakc/Mousers/mouse.html***
Nickelodeon ***www.nickjr.com***
Sesame Street
www.sesamestreet.com/preschool

8 PLUS

AJ Kids ***www.ajkids.com***
BBC Schools Online
www.bbc.co.uk/education/schools
Club-Z ***www.club-z.com***
EduWeb ***www.eduweb.co.uk***
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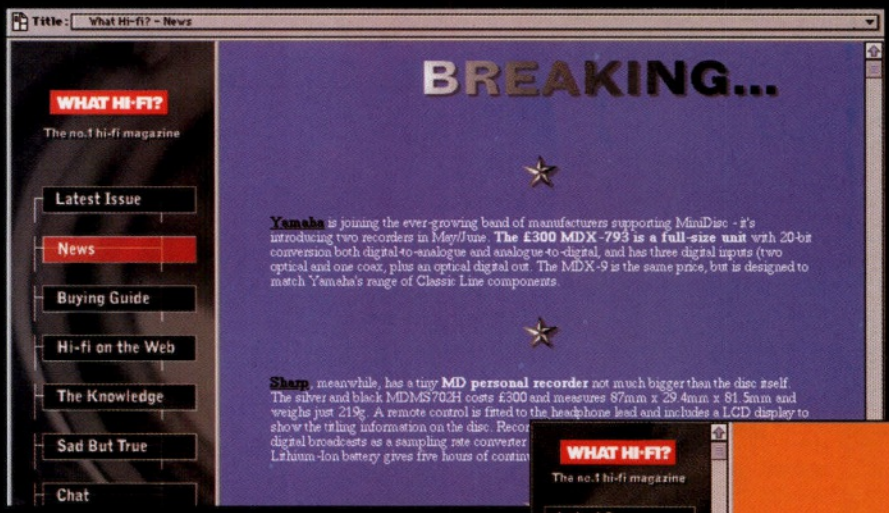
www.familyeducation.com



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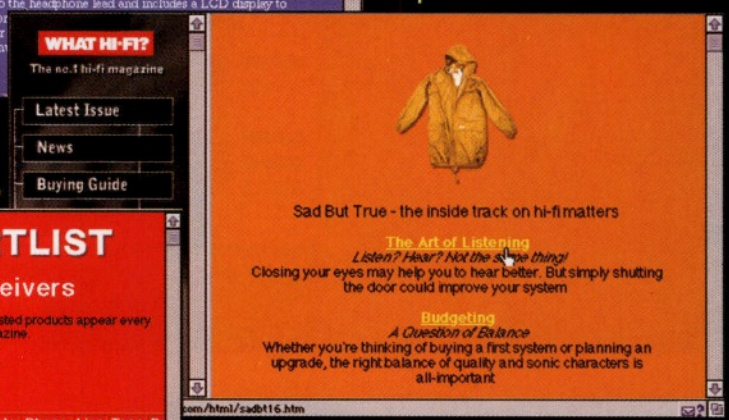

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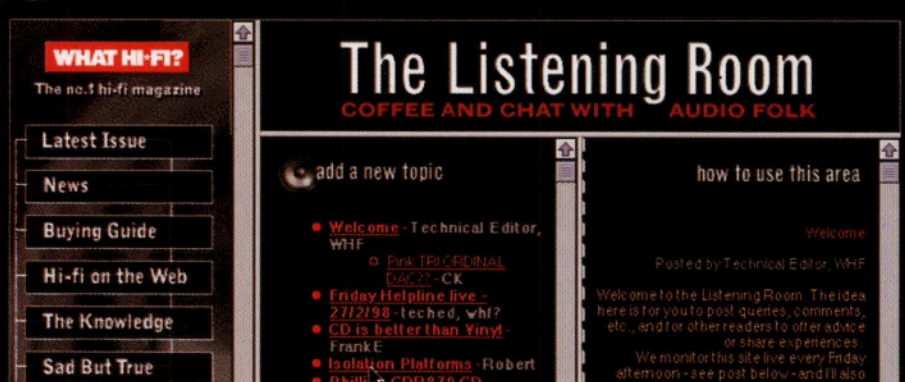

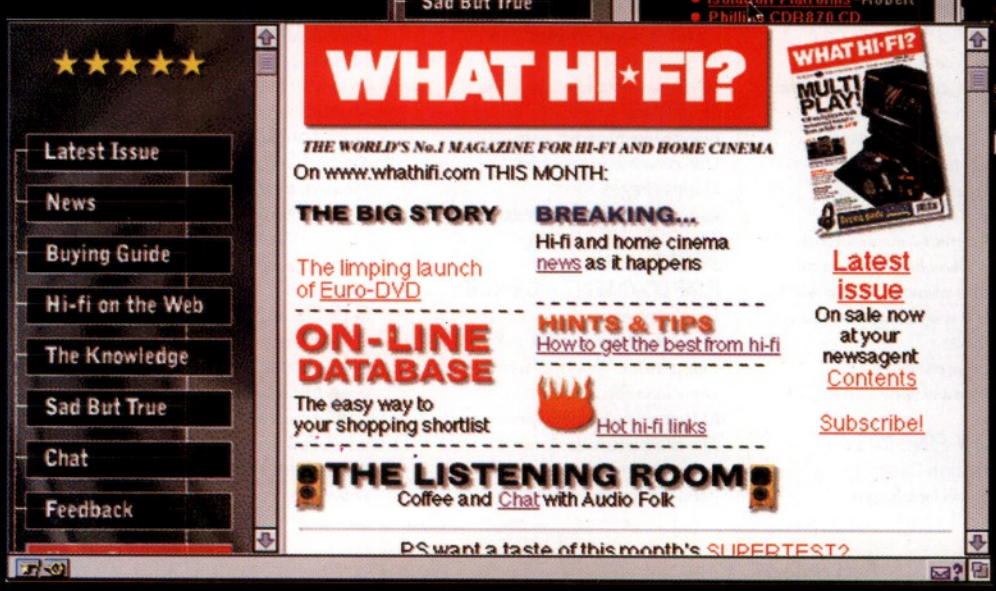

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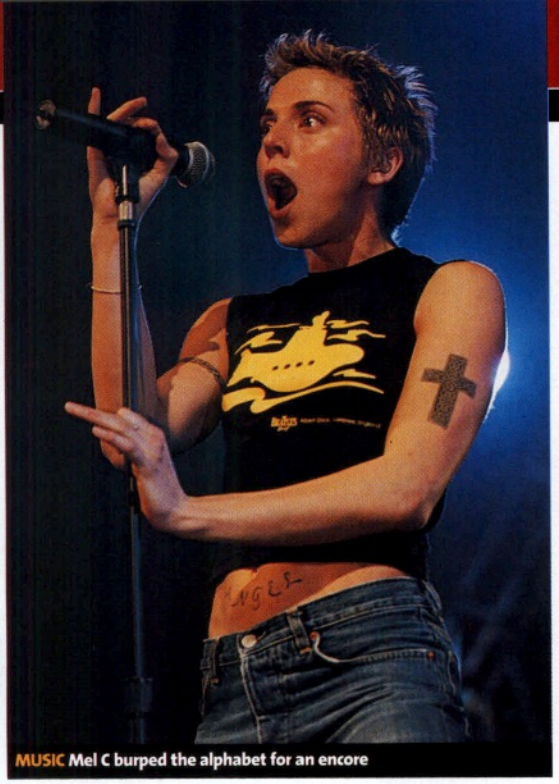

MUSIC Mel C burped the alphabet for an encore

NEWS Read www.independent.co.uk

SEARCH Chug along with www.pandia.com

SHOPPING 'I'd like some taste, please, to go'

BJ Pinchbeck Homework Helper ***www.bjpinchbeck.com***
Tarzan ***disney.go.com/worldsofdisney/tarzan***
Teen Advice ***www.teenadvice.net***
Thunk ***www.thunk.com***
Yahooligans ***www.yahooligans.com***

MAGAZINES

ONLINE MAGS

Foocha ***www.foocha.com***
The Onion ***www.theonion.com***
Salon ***www.salon.com***
Seven ***www.sevenmag.com***
Slate ***www.slate.com***
Suck ***www.suck.com***
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Word ***www.word.com***

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Ford ***www.ford.co.uk***
Honda ***www.honda.co.uk***
Jaguar ***www.jaguarcars.com***
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Mazda ***www.mazda.co.uk***
Mercedes-Benz ***www.mercedes-benz.co.uk***
Mitsubishi ***www.mitsubishi-cars.co.uk***
Nissan ***www.nissan-europe.com***
Peugeot ***www.peugeot.co.uk***
Porsche ***www.porsche.co.uk***
Rover ***www.rover.co.uk***
Toyota ***www.toyota.co.uk***
Vauxhall ***www.vauxhall.co.uk***
Volkswagen ***www.volkswagen.co.uk***
Volvo ***www.volvocars.volvo.co.uk***

MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

Imperial War Museum ***www.iwm.org.uk***
London Transport Museum ***www.ltmuseum.co.uk***
National Gallery ***www.nationalgallery.org.uk***
NaturalHistory Museum ***www.nhm.ac.uk***
Tate Gallery ***www.tate.org.uk***

MUSIC

TOP ARTISTS

B*witched ***www.b-witched.com***
The Beatles ***members.tripod.com/~taz4158/pepper.html***
Blur ***www.blur.co.uk***
David Bowie ***www.davidbowie.com***
Boyzone ***www.boyzone.co.uk***
Catatonia ***www.catatonia.com***
Garbage ***www.garbage.com***
Macy Gray ***www.macygray.com***
Natalie Imbruglia ***www.imbruglia.com***
Jamiroquai ***www.jamiroquai.co.uk***
Manic Street Preachers ***www.manics.co.uk***
Melanie C ***www.northern-star.co.uk***
George Michael ***www.aegean.net***
Oasis ***www.oasisinet.com***
Prince ***www.love4oneanother.com***
Radiohead ***www.radiohead.co.uk***
REM ***www.remhq.com***
Stereophonics ***www.stereophonics.co.uk***
Supergrass ***www.supergrass.com***
Travis ***www.travisonline.com***
Robbie Williams ***www.robbiewilliams.co.uk***

NEWS

NEWSPAPERS

Daily Record ***www.record-mail.co.uk***
Financial Times ***www.ft.com***
Guardian ***www.guardian.co.uk***
Independent ***www.independent.co.uk***
The Mirror ***www.mirror.co.uk***
Daily Star ***www.megastar.co.uk***
The Sun ***www.bun.com***
Sunday People ***www.people.co.uk***
The Telegraph ***www.telegraph.co.uk***
The Times ***www.the-times.co.uk***

NEWS SERVICES

CNN ***www.cnn.com***
ITN ***www.itn.co.uk***
NewsNow ***www.newsnow.co.uk***
News Unlimited ***www.newsunlimited.co.uk***
PA News ***www.pa.press.net***
Reuters ***www.reuters.com/news***

PEOPLE FINDERS

EMAIL ADDRESSES

Bigfoot ***bigfoot.com***
EmailFinder ***www.emailfinder.com***
People Site ***www.peoplesite.com***
WhoWhere ***www.whowhere.com***
Yahoo ***people.yahoo.com***

PHONE NUMBERS

BT Directory Enquiries ***www.bt.co.uk/phonenetuk/***
Thomson Directories ***www.infospace.com/uk.thomw/***
Yellow Pages ***www.yell.co.uk***

SCIENCE

IQ TESTS

Brain.com ***www.brain.com/***
IQ Test.com ***www.iqtest.com***
Mensa Workout ***www.mensa.org/workout.html***

NEWS AND UPDATES

BBC Science ***news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/sci/tech/default.htm***
Eureka Alert ***www.eurekalert.org***
NASA ***science.nasa.gov***
New Scientist ***www.newscientist.com***
WhyFiles ***whyfiles.news.wisc.edu/***

SEARCH ENGINES

Altavista ***www.altavista.digital.com***
Ask Jeeves ***www.askjeeves.com***
Dogpile ***www.dogpile.com***
Electric Library ***www.elibrary.com***
FAST ***alltheweb.com***
Google ***www.google.com***
HotBot ***www.hotbot.com***
Lycos ***www.lycos.com***
MetaCrawler ***www.metacrawler.com***
Northern Light ***www.nlsearch.com***
Pandia Search Central ***www.pandia.com***

SHOPPING

ONLINE AUCTIONS

Auction Hunter ***www.auctionhunter.co.uk***
Auction Universe ***www.auctionuniverse.co.uk***
eBay ***www.ebay.co.uk***
eBid ***www.ebid.co.uk***
eSwap ***www.eswap.co.uk***
Eurobid ***www.eurobid.com***
Last Minute ***www.lastminute.com***
QXL ***www.qxl.com***

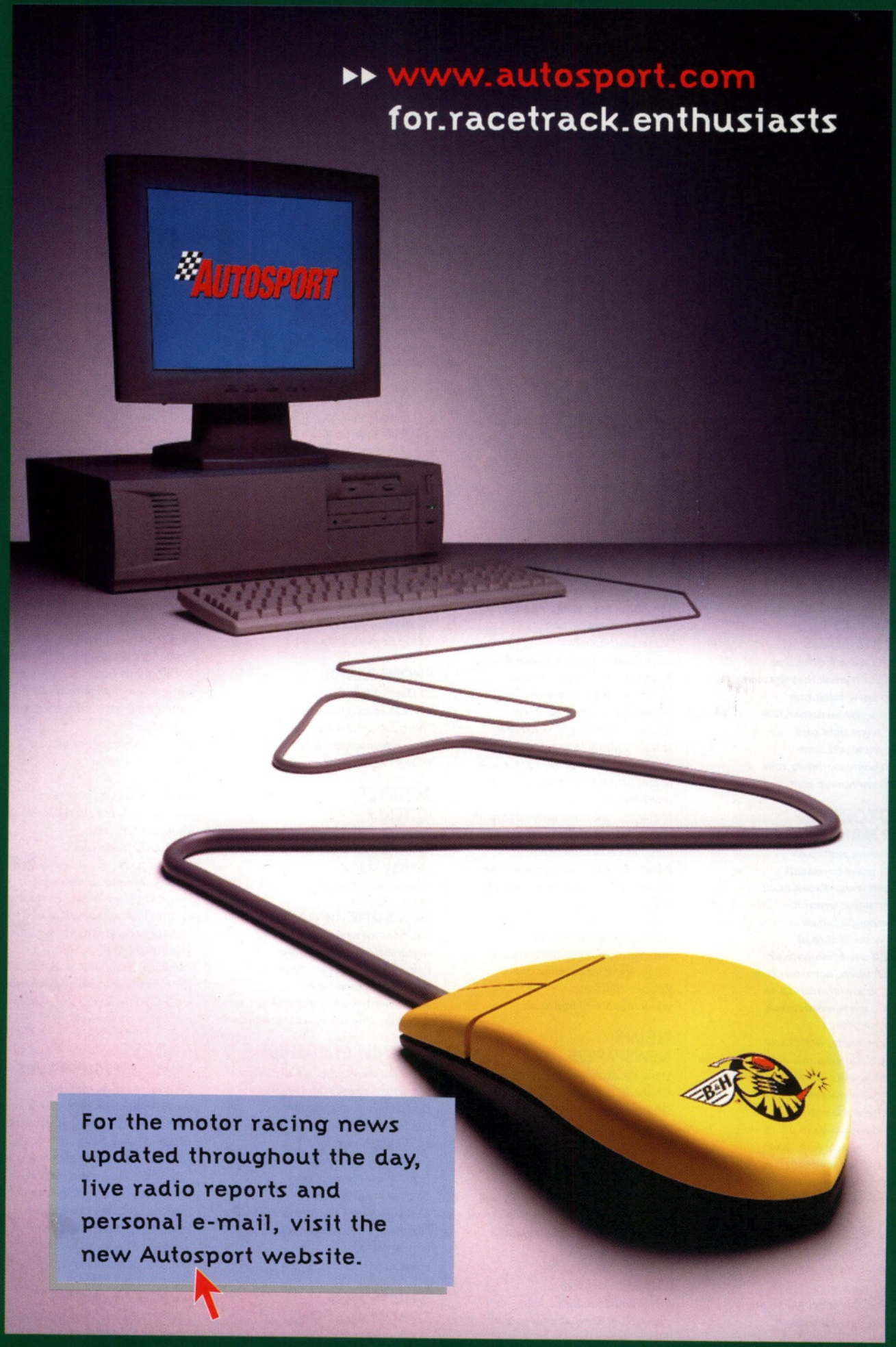
SHOPPING DIRECTORIES

Best of British ***www.bestofbritish.com***
Buckingham Gate ***www.buckinghamgate.co.uk***
Centreshop ***www.centreshop.com***
Enterprise City ***www.enterprisecity.co.uk***
IMRG ***shops.imrg.org***
Internet Shopping ***www.internetshopping.com***
ShopGuide ***www.shopguide.co.uk***
Shoppers Universe ***shoppersuniverse.com***
Shopping UK ***www.internetics.co.uk/shop/***
Shops On The Net ***www.sotn.com***
ShopYell ***www.shopyell.co.uk***
Taxi ***www.mytaxi.co.uk***
The Virtual Mall ***www.thevirtualmall.co.uk***
UK Max ***www.ukmax.co.uk/shopping***
UK Shopping Zone ***ukshoppingzone.co.uk***

SPORT

FA PREMIERSHIP CLUBS

Arsenal ***www.arsenal.co.uk***
Aston Villa ***www.astonvilla-fc.co.uk***
Bradford City ***www.legend.co.uk/citygent/index.html***
Chelsea ***www.chelseafc.co.uk***
Coventry City ***www.ccfc.co.uk***
Derby County ***www.dcfc.co.uk***
Everton ***www.evertonfc.com***
Leeds United ***www.lufc.co.uk***
Leicester City ***www.lcfc.co.uk***
Liverpool ***anfield.merseyworld.com***
Manchester United ***www.manutd.com***
Middlesborough ***www.mfc.co.uk***
Newcastle United ***www.newcastle-utd.co.uk/nufc/***


www.autosport.com
for.racetrack.enthusiasts
AUTOSPORT
For the motor racing news updated throughout the day, live radio reports and personal e-mail, visit the new Autosport website.

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FAVOURITES Watch the locals at www.howletts.net

SPORT Hook up www.fishing.co.uk

WEBCAM Look forward to exciting views

Sheffield Wednesday ***www.swfc.co.uk***
Southampton
www.saintsfc.co.uk/index.htm
Sunderland ***www.sunderland-afc.com***
Tottenham Hotspur ***www.spurs.co.uk***
Watford ***www.watfordfc.com***
West Ham Utd ***www.whufc.co.uk***
Wimbledon ***www.wimbledon-fc.co.uk***

SPORT A-Z

Athletics ***www.athletix.gr***
Basketball ***www.boxingpress.com***
Boxing ***www.boxingonline.com***
Cricket ***www.cricinfo.com***
Fishing ***www.fishing.co.uk***
Football ***www.footballnews.co.uk***
Golf ***Golf.com***
Hockey ***www.fieldhockey.com***
Martial Arts
www.martial-arts-network.com
Motorsport ***www.autosport.com***
Racing ***www.sporting-life.com***
Rugby League ***www.rleague.com***
Rugby Union ***www.rugby365.co.uk***
Skiing ***www.complete-skier.com***
Tennis ***www.tenniscountry.com***

STYLE AND FASHION

MAIN SITES

BeautyLink ***www.beautylink.com***
Boo.com ***www.boo.com***
Cosmopolitan ***www.cosmomag.com***
Elle ***www.ellemag.com***
Fashion And Beauty Internet Association ***www.fbia.com***
Fashion Icon ***www.fashion-icon.com***
Fashion Mall ***www.fashionmall.com***
FashionNet ***www.fashion.net***
Models.com ***www.models.com***
Salonweb ***www.salonweb.com***
Style Experts ***www.stylexperts.com***
Vogue ***www.vogue.com***

TOP LABELS

Armani ***www.armaniexchange.com***
Benetton ***www.benetton.com***
Diesel ***www.diesel.co.uk***
DKNY ***www.donnakaran.com***
Gap ***www.gap.com***
Levi's ***www.levi.com***
Paul Smith ***www.paulsmith.co.uk***
Red or Dead ***www.redordead.co.uk***
Tommy Hilfiger ***www.tommypr.com***
Wrangler ***www.wrangler.com***

TELEVISION

TOP SHOWS

Big Breakfast
bigbreakfast.channel4.com
Brookside ***www.brookie.com***
Coronation Street
www.coronationstreet.co.uk
EastEnders
www.bbc.co.uk/eastenders
Friends ***friends.warnerbros.com***
Hollyoaks ***www.hollyoaks.com***
Jerry Springer ***www.universalstudios.com/tv/jerryspringer/***
Neighbours ***www.neighbours.com***
X-Files ***www.thex-files.com***

TV COMPANIES

BBC ***www.bbc.co.uk***
Channel Four ***www.channel4.co.uk***
Channel Five ***www.channel5.co.uk***
ITV ***www.itv.co.uk***
Sky ***www.sky.co.uk***

TRAVEL

AIRLINES

Air Canada ***www.aircanada.ca***
Air France ***www.airfrance.com***
American Air ***www.americanair.com***
Britannia ***www.britanniaairways.com***
BA ***www.british-airways.com***
BM ***www.iflybritishmidland.com***
Continental ***www.flycontinental.com***
Easy Jet ***www.easyjet.com***
Go ***www.go-fly.com***
Iberia ***www.iberia.com***
KLM ***www.klmuk.com***
Lufthansa ***www.lufthansa.com***
NorthWest Airlines ***www.nwa.com***
Qantas ***www.qantas.com.au***
United Airlines ***www.ual.com***
Virgin Air ***www.virgin-atlantic.com***

DESTINATION GUIDES

Australia ***australia-online.com***
Caribbean ***www.caribbean-travel.com***
France ***www.franceway.com***
Germany ***www.germany-tourism.de***
Greece ***www.areianet.gr/infoxenios***
India ***www.indiagov.org***
Ireland ***www.shamrock.org***
Italy ***www.travel.it***
Japan ***www.jnto.go.jp***
Portugal ***www.portugal-web.com***
Ski Club Of Great Britain
www.skiclub.co.uk
Spain ***www.spaintour.com***
UK ***www.visitbritain.com***
US ***www.go-unitedstates.com***

FERRIES

Ferry Savers ***www.ferrysavers.co.uk***
P&O ***www.poef.com/poef/index.htm***
Travel Britain ***www.travelbritain.com/UKPassengerFerries.html***
Travel.World
www.travel.world.co.uk/ferries.htm

RAIL TRAVEL

Euro Railways ***www.eurorailways.com***
Great Eastern Railway ***www.ger.co.uk***
Great Western Trains
www.great-western-trains.co.uk
Railtrack ***www.railtrack.co.uk***
Scotrail ***www.scotrail.co.uk***
UK Public Transport Information
www.pti.org.uk
Virgin Trains ***www.virgintrains.co.uk***

TRAVEL AGENTS

A2B ***www.a2btravel.com***
Airtickets ***www.airtickets.co.uk***
Bargain Holidays
www.bargainholidays.org
Biztravel ***www.biztravel.com***
Campus Travel
www.campustravel.co.uk
Cheap Flights
www.cheapflights.co.uk
Deckchair ***www.deckchair.com***
ebookers ***www.ebookers.com***
Expedia ***www.expedia.co.uk***
Internet Travel Services
www.itsnet.co.uk
Last Minute
www.lastminute.com
STA Travel ***www.statravel.co.uk***
Thomas Cook
www.thomascook.co.uk
Thomson
www.thomson-holidays.com
Trailfinders ***www.trailfinder.com***
Travelocity ***www.travelocity.com***

WEBCAMS

DIRECTORIES

Allcam ***www.allcam.com***
Camcity ***www.camcity.com***
Digital Camera Network
www.dcn.com
Earthcam ***www.earthcam.com***
Webcam Central
www.camcentral.com
WebCam World
www.webcamworld.com
Webviews ***www.webviews.co.uk***

FAVOURITES

AfriCam ***www.africam.com***
Dealey Plaza Cam
www.earthcam.com/jfk
The Dolls' House
www.bravo.co.uk/dolls
Howletts Zoo ***www.howletts.net***
Interactive Model Railroad
rr-vs.informatik.uni-ulm.de
Jennicam ***www.jennicam.org***
Peeling Paint Cam ***www.mich.com/~rreibel/paintcam.htm***
Ultimate Taxi ***www.ultimatetaxi.com***

WEB CENSORS

Cybersnoop ***www.pearlsw.com***
Cyber Patrol ***www.cyberpatrol.com***
Net Nanny ***www.netnanny.com***
Xcheck ***www.xcheck.net***

WEB DIRECTORIES

About.com ***www.about.com***
4anything ***www.4anything.com***
AOL Netfind ***www.aol.com/netfind***
Excite ***www.excite.com***
Infoseek ***infoseek.go.com***
Liszt (Mailing lists) ***www.liszt.com***
LookSmart ***www.looksmart.com***
Open Directory ***www.dmoz.org***
UK Plus ***www.ukplus.co.uk***
WebCrawler ***www.webcrawler.com***
Yahoo! ***www.yahoo.com***
Yell ***www.yell.co.uk***

www.you'vegottobejoking/there'snoway
i'mpaying£10,500forthatcar_justwhatdo
youtakemefor/somekindofmoron.com

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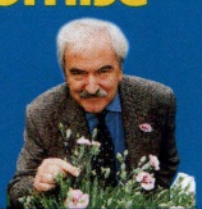


Number One

Free web access, site space and e-mails

Sales pitch

Avoid the sales rush – shop on-line

16 pages that will change the way you use the Net

Welcome

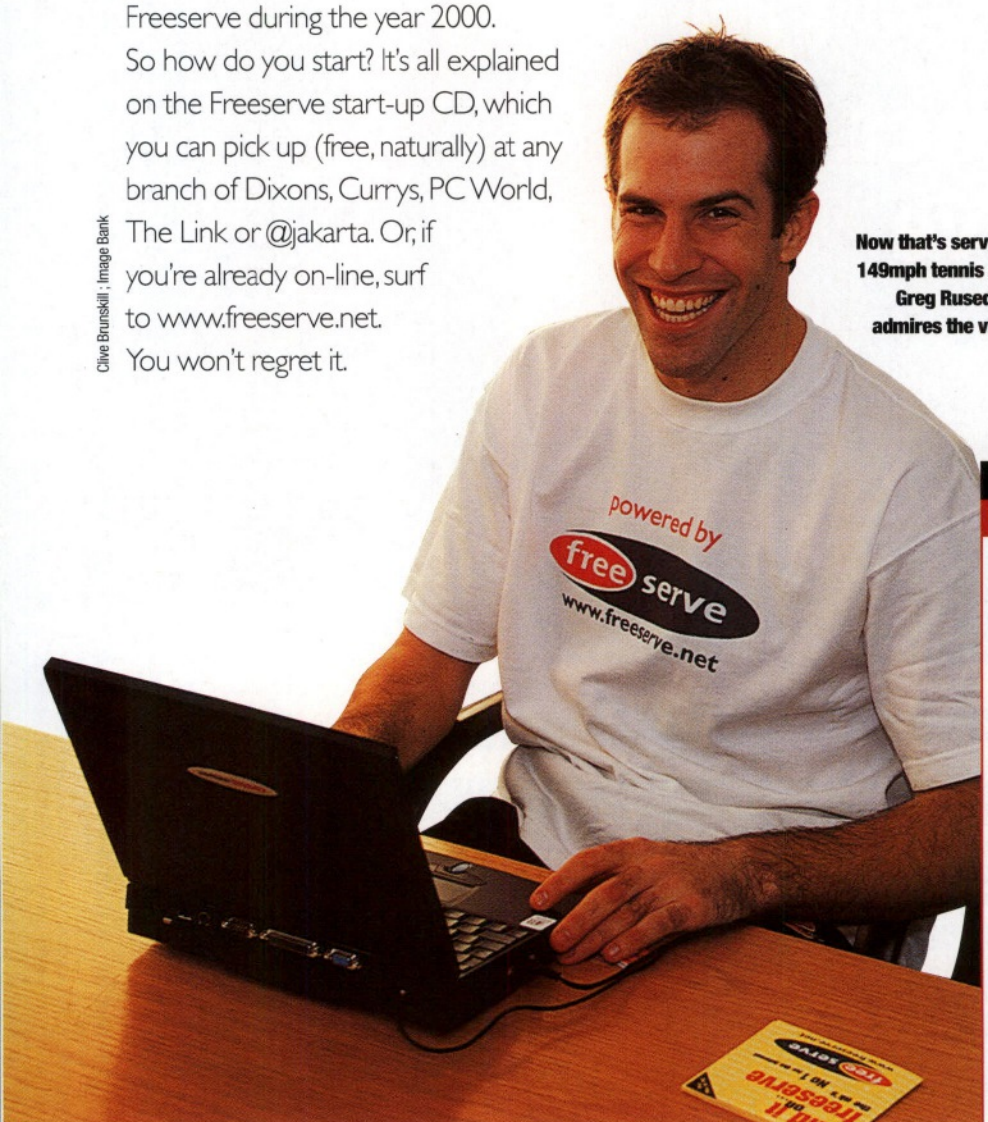
No.1 for the In

Welcome to Freeserve, the nation's number one Internet service provider. More than 1.5 million customers have already signed up and with even more members joining all the time, Freeserve is the UK's No 1 for the Internet.

So what's the big deal? Read on to find out – the next 15 pages might revolutionise the way you use the Net. To start with, there's the benefits of joining Freeserve – absolutely free: you get no-cost access to the Net, unlimited free e-mail addresses and some gratis room on the Web to build your own website if you want to, plus the education and entertainment provided on Freeserve's ever-expanding home page.

If it all seems a bit complicated, don't worry. This month, we interview tennis ace Greg Rusedski. The exclusive interview starts on page x. Elsewhere in this issue, there's a look at the computer-games phenomenon, advice on how to build your own website and a look forward to what we can expect from Freeserve during the year 2000.

So how do you start? It's all explained on the Freeserve start-up CD, which you can pick up (free, naturally) at any branch of Dixons, Currys, PC World, The Link or @jakarta. Or, if you're already on-line, surf to www.freeserve.net. You won't regret it.



Clive Brunskill : Image Bank

Now that's service: 149mph tennis ace Greg Rusedski admires the view

E-mail

It's not like this in our day

E-mail of the species

In case you hadn't noticed, there's been a quiet revolution in communication of late. One of the main reasons people now log on to the Internet is to access their e-mail as the world turns on to a marvellous new method of mass, instantaneous communication. When you sign up with Freeserve, you get unlimited free e-mail addresses and access – paying only for the cost of the call. The bonuses of e-mail are obvious. It's a great deal cheaper than writing to friends, family and contacts overseas, but more than that it's a great deal quicker – the mail gets around the world straight away, whether you're writing to Papua New Guinea or Newport Pagnell.

CHANNEL GUIDE

Some of the great channels available on Freeserve

Books

Shopping for books can be hard on the feet *and* the wallet. Let BOL, our on-line bookshop, take the weight off both, with up to 50 per cent off the latest bestsellers. View our on-line bookshelves, and when you're ready to buy you'll find rapid ordering and delivery. Book some time on-line with BOL now.

Business Centre

Freeserve's recently redesigned Business Centre provides essential on-line resources for your small business. You can get business news, design business cards, enjoy cheaper and more effective communications and maximise your company's potential with our range of on-line business tools and resources. And you can register your very own domain name.

ternet

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www.freeserve.net

Your Site

A space of your own

Another freebie from Freeserve is the space to set up your own website – a whacking great 15 megabytes of it. It's held on Freeserve's central computers so you don't have to worry about overloading your machine – but you can access it whenever you want.

Now building your own website might sound like flying to the moon but there's really nothing to it – there's free software available through Freeserve to help you through the stages, and all the instructions are laid out in plain English on the Freeserve website.

In addition to that, check out pages xiv-xv of this issue, which gives you advice on how to plan your website.

Soon enough, you could have your own little space on the World Wide Web for anyone on the planet to look at.

Be nice

Freeserve is powering ITV's Year of Promise. Find out how you could help make the world a better place.

page xii

Our Site

Starting orders

Lost on the Internet? Or just need some good ideas for what to look at? Freeserve's homepage at www.freeserve.net provides a window on the Web and offers you the starting point for all your journeys through cyberspace.

At Freeserve's site, you get access to all the excellent channels on offer. You could try the new women's channel iCircle, get the latest sporting results and news, enjoy the various entertainment channels, swot up with the NAHT-approved education channel and check out several others besides. See the bottom of this page and the next for further details on these and more channels.

Whatever you want, it's on Freeserve. And you'll find loads of money-saving offers getting you great deals on all sorts of goods.

You can keep your eye on the latest news, updated minute by minute as you'd expect from a fast-moving medium like the Internet, plus the breaking stories in business, sport and weather.

There's so much to do, you might never leave!

And it's free

All these features... and it's all for free

Freeserve is no misnomer. All these services you get from Freeserve outlined on this page – all you need to get on the Internet – are completely free. Hence the name Freeserve. There's no catch – there's no charge for unlimited free e-mails, the 15 megabytes of space on the Web are completely free, you don't pay for the Net access and the huge variety of channels provided on Freeserve's portal come gratis.

The only price you pay is for the local phone call (no matter where you live and where you're calling) to connect to Freeserve. And there's even a way to get around that. If you register for the Freeserve Time offer you can get up to ten hours of totally free Net time per month by dialling 162 before making long-distance telephone calls. For example, if you spend £4 on calls via 162, you'll get four hours' free Net time, and so on up to ten hours. And it'll save you money on those long-distance calls, too. For details, see *www.freeserve.net/time*.

'No catch – no charge'

Careers

We've got the world of work wired. Our Careers channel lets you search databases of 70,000 jobs nationwide and even apply on-line. You can submit your CV and allow employers who need your skills in your area seek you out. Let Freeserve help you find your dream job.

Chat

Freeserve's ever-popular chat service is a great hit. Now you can use our new 3D chat rooms to get around and explore virtual reality worlds – you've got to try it to believe it! See page vii to learn how chatroom members met up in Blackpool at Christmas.

Communications

Speechmail lets you access e-mail by phone, the e.notifier e-mail to pager service keeps you in touch with your e-mail account while you are offline, and Prestophone brings you big savings on your phone bills with an Internet-based phone account.

Education

From pre-school through to GCSE, the Freeserve Education channel provides the interactive environment that is needed to encourage learning new skills.

Film and Cinema

If you're a fan of the silver screen, Freeserve gives you what you want. There's news of all the latest cinema and video releases and plenty on all the big blockbusters. Play games, read news and enter competitions – you'll be way too busy to go to the movies!

Things to do today

Stuck for stuff to do? Installed and on the Net, but all revved up with no place to go? Then check these out!

TREAT YOURSELF to a slap-up dinner at one of the UK's top restaurants. Use the search engine at *freeserve.simplyfood.co.uk/eatingout/*

SHAPE UP and get rid of that Christmas bulge by buying a diet book. Flick through the huge selection of titles at *www.freeserve.net/books/*

GET OUT and shake those January blues with tickets to a show. Check out the entertainment channel at *www.freeserve.net/whatson/*

LEARN HOW to use that new software you got for your PC at Christmas. Wise up at the education channel at *www.freeserve.net/education/*

MAKE A MINT on the Stock Exchange. If you think you could make more money than Nick Leeson lost, try the money channel at *www.freeserve.net/money/*

LEARN YOUR FUTURE by getting your own personal year 2000 horoscope. Stargaze in cyberspace at *www.freeserve.net/horoscopes/*

BEND YOUR MIND with a few trivia games and quizzes. Wrack your brains on the fun channel at *www.freeserve.net/fun/*

PIT YOUR WITS at Fantasy Football against other budding Alex Fergusons. Try the monthly or weekly games on the sports channel *www.freeserve.net/fantasy_league/*

CLEAR OFF with a bargain winter sun flight. If you can't hack January in Blighty, escape through the travel channel at *www.freeserve.net/travel/*

New this year

A taster of forthcoming events on Freeserve in 2000

Freeserve enters the 21st Century in an enviable and dominant position as the largest, most popular Internet service provider in the country, with unequalled links to businesses and partnerships throughout the Web community. More than 1.5 million people have realised the benefits of joining and have signed up, making Freeserve the UK's No. 1 for the Internet.

However, all the hard work which has gone into making Freeserve the best would be useless if there wasn't an equal amount going in to make sure Freeserve stays at the top of the tree. There will be no resting on laurels during the year 2000.

For instance, Freeserve is powering the largest-ever on-screen television promotional campaign, the Year of Promise. A massive venture undertaken with ITV, the Year of Promise allows several celebrities and thousands upon thousands of members of the public to make promises designed to mark the new millennium by benefiting others and making a difference for the future.

Freeserve is managing the campaign website at www.itv.yearofpromise.co.uk, and in particular the huge database of promises from the humble and the mighty. There's a feature about the Year of Promise on page xii.

Another Freeserve undertaking for the new millennium is the Valentines 2000 campaign. Like the Year of Promise, this is a positive appeal which is designed to seek out the most romantic couple in Britain.

Organised in conjunction with *The Mirror*, Valentines 2000 has generated a wealth of heartwarming stories, but a winner must be chosen and the six finalists will enjoy a celebrity dinner at the Savoy Hotel the night before Valentine's Day. Again, there are more details to be found on page xiii.

Recent months have seen several major channel launches on Freeserve, with the women's channel iCircle and the new shopping channel SHOP@freeserve just two. The new channels are designed to extend and improve surfers' enjoyment of the Freeserve site, and don't be surprised if more channels are created or improved as Freeserve continues to stay ahead of the game.

That's just the start. Keep your eyes on the Freeserve website – and of course *the net* – for more details as the year, and Freeserve, progresses.

Image Bank; PA

Keep glued to your screen to keep up with the latest developments

CHANNEL GUIDE

Some of the great channels available on Freeserve

Food and drink

From recipes to restaurant guides and cocktails to competitions, there's everything you could possibly need to feed your food fetish. Check out the weekend recipes and wine recommendation.

Football

Barmy about the beautiful game? The football channel caters for even the most obsessive fan. There's a complete results service, full table listings and stats for clubs from the Premiership down. And there's a complete news service, a database of top players and pages on all the big clubs.

Horoscopes

Let a star read your stars! Celebrity astrologer Russell Grant offers daily, weekly and monthly readings for all star signs. Or you can even get your own personal horoscope for the year 2000 for just £19.99.

Money

Freeserve has all the latest figures on every major firm and financial instrument, along with comment and analysis from the best in business, including Motley Fool and Mrs. Cohen. If you feel like challenging your investment skills, try playing the fantasy share portfolio game.

Music

Whether it's Greig or the Gallaghers you can find news, reviews and event listings on everything musical. You can buy gig tickets and CDs on the Net in seconds, and take your time over several features and news stories. Music to your ears!

January: the first sale of the century

How to benefit from the traditional post-Christmas bargain hunt without leaving the house

January sales is a slightly inaccurate term for a shopping phenomenon which generally starts on Boxing Day. There are bargains galore to be found as shops sell off surplus stock bought in for the Christmas market; often even before 25 Dec, commercials spring up advertising the post-Christmas bonanza.

Many people take the January sales so seriously, they camp out in sleeping bags outside the store to ensure their premium place in the queue. The sales can be no place for the faint-hearted as elbows fly and the offers are squabbled over by experienced bargain-hunters.

No need to battle through the pointy elbows for the bargains

Home comforts

So why not avoid all that unpleasantness by shopping from home? E-commerce sites are already often lower than high street stores, and there's just as much of a sell-off in cyberspace as there is on the street.

As ever, SHOP@freeserve is at the forefront of bringing you bargains. You may have enjoyed the benefits of the service to get your Christmas shopping done; if not, and you were forced to battle through those desperate festive shoppers, maybe you'll have learned the lesson!

Wide choice

Whatever you want to have a look for, you'll find it on SHOP@freeserve. Dozens of retailers have signed up already and more are coming on-line all the time. The complete list is too long to relate here, but it covers all the bases from books and music through food and furniture to sports and travel.

So if you fancy picking up bargains from retailers like BOL, PC World, easyshop, Audiostreet, kitbag, Bargainholidays.com and Exchange & Mart, check out SHOP@freeserve. You never know what bargains you might find.

Avoid heartache

The next big present-buying season isn't far away either: in case you'd forgotten, it's Valentine's Day on 14 Feb, and you'll be in big trouble if you don't buy your loved one a present. Why not get it done now and save yourself the hassle?

Again, Freeserve can help. There's classic girly gifts such as chocolates (Thorntons) and flowers (Interflora), or boys' toys like computer games (@jakarta) and of course football shirts (Kitbag).

Safe as houses

Of course, it's all completely safe. On-line shopping is becoming increasingly sophisticated, and credit card safety on SHOP@freeserve is assured by the Freeserve Promise.

The Promise guarantees the user security, along with choice, quality, value for money, customer service and privacy. All partners on SHOP@freeserve pledge to protect the consumer, so your shopping will be completely safe!

For the ultimate in Net security you could try marbles, the credit card launched by Freeserve and HFC Bank. In the event that your card was ever used fraudulently, you wouldn't pay a penny! Apply for yours today at the Freeserve site.

News

Get tomorrow's papers today with a superb news service. You'll get all the latest UK and foreign stories, together with business news and a complete rundown of headlines from the national press.

Shopping

Freeserve's new SHOP@freeserve channel can provide flowers or food, a car or a computer. Look out for great deals and special savings in the January sales. Save time and money – shop direct from your desktop!

Sport

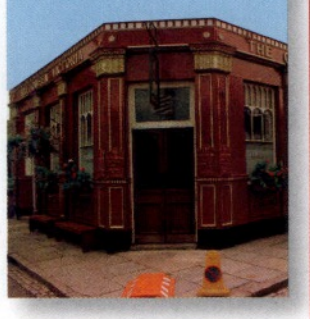
Whatever your sport, you'll find it on Freeserve. Cricket, rugby, Formula 1 or golf; you can get the results and follow your heroes on the Sport channel. If you're into football, there's a separate dedicated channel, giving other sports the room to have their coverage here!

Travel

Click on Freeserve's travel channel for instant access to a database of 70,000 flights and holidays worldwide. There are always sensational last-minute deals on offer. Also check out the on-line travel guide featuring all you need to know on your destination, with climate, maps, money, getting visas and much more.

TV and radio

Not only do we give you full TV and radio listings specific to your area, our critics will even advise you on what to watch if you just can't decide. But only if you can tear yourself away from Freeserve!



Some of the biggest names in tennis – Kefelnikov, Rusedski, Krajicek, Henman – have been invited to London's Docklands

Anyone fancy a game of

Freeserve gets you 20% off admission to Britain's 'Winter Wimbledon'

During the long dark nights of winter, thoughts turn longingly to hot summer days and lazy games of tennis in the hazy afternoon sun.

Not even Freeserve can turn winter into summer, but if you're suffering from winter woes Freeserve will get you money off tickets to watch some tennis to help to get yourself in a happier state of mind. Luckily, it's indoors!

In fact, the AXA ATP Tennis Cup is often referred to as Britain's Winter Wimbledon, so you can dream of balmy June afternoons while you watch the action. It takes place at the plush London Arena, just a short lob from the Millennium Dome, starting on 21 February – making it an ideal Valentines present for the tennis lover in your life.

The tournament goes on for seven days of top indoor action, and many of the game's biggest stars will be there, including the likes of Tim Henman, Richard Krajicek and Yevgeny Kafelnikov – who have all graced the tournament in recent years. And no tennis line-up would be complete without the Freeserve-sponsored Greg Rusedski, the man with the fastest serve in the world at 149mph. Check out the great interview with Greg and exclusive pictures on page x.

The competition will be held at the lovely new London Arena in the heart of the Docklands

'With 1.5 million members, Free

NEW ON FREESERVE

Check out some of our great new features

Careering off

January is a common time for people to start new jobs, whether it's replacing those who've left the company or those who can't face coming back after the office party! If you feel it's time for pastures new, check out Freeserve's careers channel, with its links to the easily-searchable Peoplebank and Jobsite databases. Just don't do it while the boss is watching…

www.freeserve.net/careers/

Mock horror

It's not long now until the mock exams start for those students sitting their GCSEs this summer, and treating revision with derision can only last for so long before things go badly wrong. Luckily, Freeserve's education channel has a revision helper which uses the NAHT-approved SAM learning technique to help you concentrate on what you really need to swot up on to help you pass with class.

www.freeserve.net/education/

Business benefits

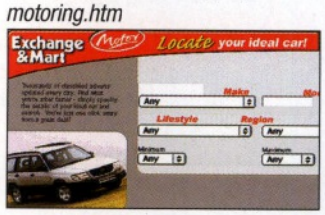
Users of Freeserve's Business Centre will discover a host of new benefits to save time and money. You can now set up your own limited company, access files on two million UK businesses, download company documents from the last five years, and search for and apply for a company trademark via the Web. You can use credit search facilities, or access Web user profiles and business user profiles. In addition, you are now able to order stationery and supplies through the Business Centre – your business partner on the Net. And on the lighter side, there's even a section called Lunch Break which gives users fun things to do while eating their mid-day snacks.

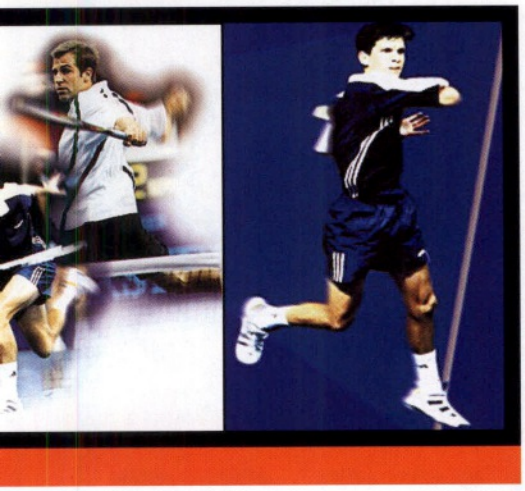
www.freeserve.net/businesscentre/

Deals on wheels

The New Year brings with it all kinds of promises to yourself that you might not keep. But how about treating yourself to that car you've wanted for a while? If you'd like a new car for the New Year then you could do a lot worse than heading to Freeserve's motoring section on the shopping channel. You can access Exchange & Mart's huge database of bargains and make your search specific to certain makes, types, models and regions, or just see what you can afford with the contents of your piggy-bank.

www.freeserve.net/shopping/motoring.htm





tennis?

powered by

free serve

www.freeserve.net

To gain your discounted tickets, simply quote the reference 'AXA 122' when booking. You can call the 24-hour ticket hotline on 0207 538 1212. That's not a premium-rate number, just the new code for central London, so calls will be charged at the usual national or local rates, depending where you are.

www.axatenniscup.com

A partner on the Net

Freeserve's Business Centre has had an overhaul recently, and has been redesigned with the intention of being your small firm's business partner on the Net. It's now a comprehensive small business resource, split into several informative and easy-to-use sections. Communications will help you to organise your information effectively with the help of conference calls, e.notifier and speechmail. Supplies will keep your cupboards full and your equipment up to date, while Finance and Legal will link you to a desktop lawyer if the need arises. You can get the latest news, of course, while the Business Information section will give you the lowdown on Web user profiles, credit search facilities and trademark registration. In other words, Business Centre will take care of the back-office stuff while you set about making a million through the Net!

Did Aunty Mabel give you an antique table lamp you'd rather not keep, or did you receive two presents the same? Try getting rid of your surplus Christmas gifts through fsacutions. Someone will want them, and Mabel won't mind.

EVENT

Freeserve chat fans meet up

If you've ever surfed Freeserve's numerous chat rooms and wondered why the thirtysomethings room was silent on 4 December, there's a good reason. The users had met up in Blackpool for a weekend of partying!

Back in October, Freeserve users got together in Gillingham, Kent, and the success of that prompted a Northern knees-up. Nearly 100 users from all over Britain met up for a Christmas dinner and a disco at a swanky hotel.

If you're interested in meeting people you regularly chat with, why not organise another do yourself and tell us about it?

Matthew Ward; Image Bank

serve is the UK's No.1 for the Internet'

John Pluthero, Chief Executive

Insured thing

Insurance lends itself naturally to the Net, being something the buyer can't feel or touch anyway, and often more of a necessity than a desire. Freeserve has teamed up with InsuranceWide to give members extremely competitive quotes from five of the top six UK insurers – sometimes in less than two minutes. And it's all safely encrypted by the most sophisticated system available.

www.insurancewide.com

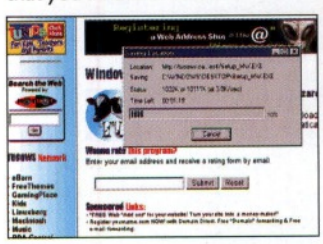
Get into *the net*

Freeserve is dedicated to bringing you the best of the Internet, and that's exactly what *the net* sets out to do too. Every month there are full listings of the best sites and articulate articles exploring the more noteworthy aspects of the Web. And Freeserve members, already used to getting the best deals, are entitled to an exclusive money-off subscription offer for *the net*. If you like what you're reading, check out the site for more details.

www.freeserve.net/thenet/

Broader horizons

Ever been frustrated by the length of time it takes to download sizeable files? If so, you might like to check out Freeserve's new high-speed Internet access, which is trialing in January before launch in the spring. It utilises BT's superfast ADSL digital lines to download data – MP3 files, movie trailers, etc – at least 10 times as quickly as normal lines. You pay a flat monthly fee and you can even use your phone while surfing. Not that you'll have time to...



be part of it! babyworld

Baby talk

Do you know anyone who has already given birth to a Millennium baby, or is due to have one in the near future? If so, you might want to tip them off about Babyworld, the UK's leading website for expectant and new parents. The site has everything that parents and parents-to-be could possibly want, with more than a thousand pages of medical and reference information, plus products guides, discussions, hundreds of top products and next-day delivery.

www.babyworld.co.uk/

@jakarta

Games

Computer games are getting so advanced, they're virtually real. As usual, Freeserve brings you the best of the bunch.

Computer games have come a long way since the days of Pac-Man and Space Invaders. Two decades on from the early efforts of Clive Sinclair and friends, home computer gaming is a multi-billion pound business – and the great graphical strides towards the ultimate realism are reflected in the money now involved.

The old idea about gamers being obsessed teenage boys is being eroded as the influence of the impressive new releases makes inroads into other markets. Gamers now come from all walks of life, from primary school children who see the computer as merely another interface with reality, to the members of an older generation who constantly marvel at the huge amounts of innovation that the ever-improving games industry provides.

And where there are advances made, Freeserve is sure to be involved somewhere. The Freeserve site brings you the best of the Net, and that includes computer games. That's why if you log on to Freeserve's games channel, you'll find yourself heading for @jakarta.

The @jakarta games channel is now in full effect, giving you access to the best computer games around. There are over 1200 products to buy on the site, so you really are spoilt for choice.

Of course, you can buy these on-line with @jakarta's E-Store that has top prices and tough security. If you do decide to put your card on the table, you'll get delivery within 48 hours on most products.

If you hate waiting for the next big thing, don't worry. All pre-ordered titles will hit your doorstep on release day. And if you want to put your postie out of a job, you can check out the site's Downloads section – so if your modem's up to speed, you can download top-quality software there and then.

Where @jakarta really comes into its own is with the E-Zine. It's the hub of the site, with all the latest previews and reviews for those who want impartial advice on their future purchases. Fans of gossip and hard facts could do much worse than check out the Word on the Street section, which brings you the most up-to-date games news possible.

The Coming Soon section gives release date info on all those pre-order products you can't wait to get your hands on and to top it all off, the Letter from the Editor should provide you with plenty

'A future that anyone

Top Ten Games

Quake III:Arena (PC)
Lock and load in preparation: the daddy of deathmatch games is back, bad and beautiful (in an ugly way)

Donkey Kong 64 (N64)
Old computer-game characters never die, they just get sidekicks – first Diddy Kong, and now Tiny, Chunky and Lanky

Soul Calibur (DC)
Over a hundred missions to accomplish. You'll be needing a demonic blade then

Sega Bass Fishing (DC)
How to relax: sit there with your special fishing-rod controller. It's remarkably easy to get hooked (sorry)

Final Fantasy VIII (PS)
Heavily-advertised, epic story of love and hate, war and peace and defending a country called Dole

Super Smash Bros (N64)
It's described as the ultimate showdown: big bad brawling with all your favourite Nintendo characters

Unreal Tournament (PC)
Stand-alone shoot-'em-up which pits you against various nasty types determined to kill you. Nice of them

FIFA 2000 (PS)
The phenomenal footy fest keeps one step ahead of the rest, simply by being the best to play. Get in!

Tomb Raider:The Last Revelation (PC)
You can't get away from Lara Croft. Not that anyone would want to

StreetFighter Alpha 3 (DC)
The beat-'em-up genre is drop-kicked into the new millennium by the long-running series, now set on a World Tour

powered by
free serve
www.freeserve.net

without frontiers

of food for thought.

All this is just for now though, and there are plenty of great things lined up around the corner as well. In just a short while visitors to Freeserve's games channel are going to be able to enjoy (wait for it...) hints and tips, expert help, discussion forums, realtime chat, art galleries and much more!

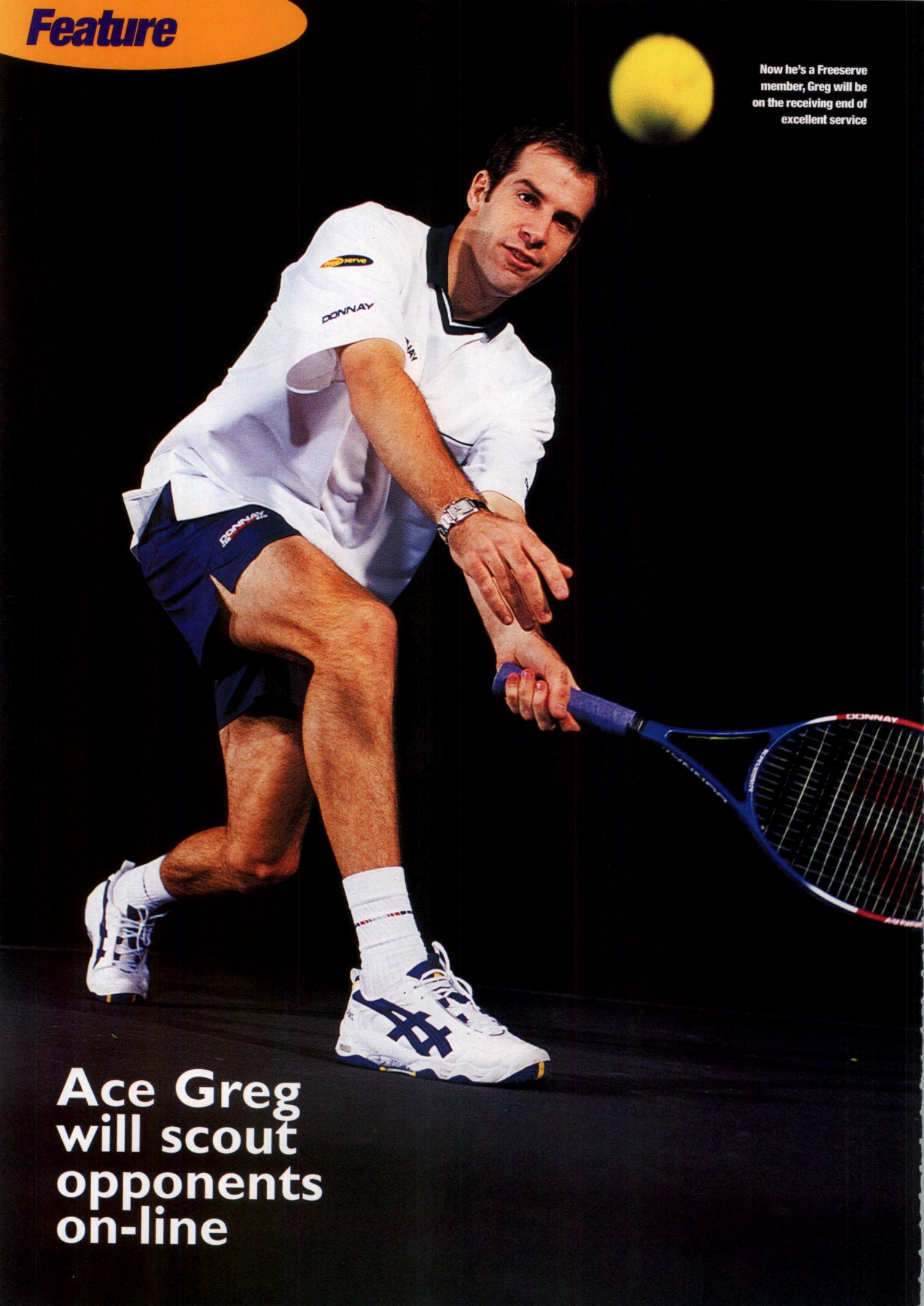
In addition to all these features, @jakarta will soon be catering for perhaps the fastest-growing sector of the computer games market: online gaming. It's all to come in the near future on Freeserve's games channel, so watch this space for details.

These extra features will make your visit more enjoyable in the future. This is, however, a future that anyone can enjoy. If you want to get the ultimate experience from @jakarta make sure you become a member of the "aktive" club. If you do, you'll be entitled to exclusive deals and benefits that Average Joes won't...

So stay tuned, because the Freeserve games channel is the complete software destination – and whatever you want to gain from the ever-developing world of computer games, @jakarta will ensure that you enjoy the unfair advantage!

can enjoy.'

Whether you're saving the planet, finding treasure or just having a kickaround, you've never had it so good



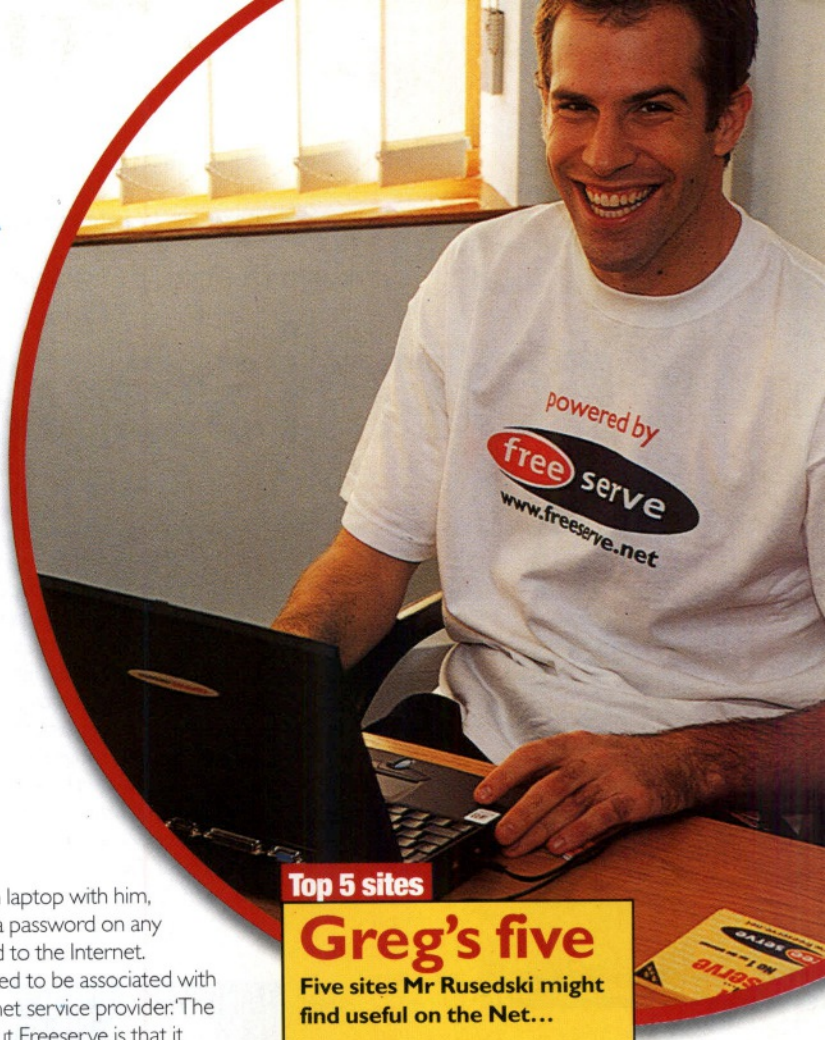
Now he's a Freeserve member, Greg will be on the receiving end of excellent service

Ace Greg will scout opponents on-line

powered by freeserve
www.freeserve.net

Net Call

Freeserve has developed a reputation for excellent service – and so has Greg Rusedski... *By Mike Sewell*



'I'VE GOT a long way to go, but I want to be an Internet superstar!' That was the verdict of tennis ace Greg Rusedski when he talked exclusively to *the net*.

'At the moment, I don't know much about the Internet – and I'm only just learning to type with two fingers – but now I'm really hoping to improve,' said Rusedski.

The popular British star, whose serve is officially the fastest on the professional tennis circuit at an awesome 149 miles per hour, makes a perfect partner for Freeserve, the UK's No. 1 for the Internet. Freeserve has agreed a two-year deal for Greg to endorse its Internet services.

He sees many opportunities to make use of his new laptop computer. Most importantly he'll be able to stay in e-mail contact with his new wife Lucy while he's playing in tournaments all around the world.

'When I'm in a different time zone, I won't have to worry about waking her up on the phone, I'll just be able to drop her an e-mail that she can pick up in the morning in the UK,' he explained.

Being a professional tennis player is not always as glamorous as it sounds. 'It can involve quite a lot of hanging around in airports and hotel rooms, so being able to use the laptop and explore the Internet with Freeserve will help cut back on the boredom.'

He also expects some real professional benefits from it. 'I'll be able to keep my own match statistics up to date, make notes and do some scouting of my opponents by calling up all their performance details on the Net.'

Of course, he can also benefit from Freeserve's new Web-based e-mail service, fsmail. This means he can send and receive e-mails wherever he is in the world, even if he doesn't have his own laptop with him, simply by tapping in a password on any computer connected to the Internet.

Rusedski is delighted to be associated with the UK's No. 1 Internet service provider. 'The important thing about Freeserve is that it enables people who don't necessarily have much experience with new technology to access the Internet.'

Freeserve will be working with Rusedski to develop live Web chats and many other promotional opportunities. He is also supporting ITV's Year of Promise, for which Freeserve is a founder partner and the power behind the charity's website, by giving his time free at a coaching clinic for youngsters during 2000. 'I'm excited to be involved in anything that gives something back, especially if it means getting more kids involved in tennis,' he said.

But Greg's main professional priorities in 2000 are to help power Britain to Davis Cup success and win a Grand Slam tournament. 'I'm having a good rest now and I'm confident that by the start of next season all my injury niggles will be behind me. If I can stay fit I think I've got a great chance to be challenging for all the major titles.'

'I want to be an Internet superstar!'

Top 5 sites

Greg's five

Five sites Mr Rusedski might find useful on the Net...

1. FREESERVE
Whatever Greg wants, he'll get it through Freeserve
www.freeserve.net/

2. RUSEDSKI.CO.UK
Good-luck messages aplenty on this unofficial site
www.rusedski.co.uk/

3. TENNIS COUNTRY
News, results and information so Greg can keep his ear to the ground
www.tenniscountry.com/

4. ON-LINE FLOWERS
Greg can e-mail Lucy a virtual bouquet from here
meetgreeks.com/postcard/

5. ARSENAL
Greg's team has just about the best official club site
www.arsenal.co.uk/

Five Donnay kitbags to be won

Fancy your chances as a tennis player? Or do you just want some nice casual gear? Either way, you could win in a fabulous competition. Freeserve has teamed up with Donnay to provide five kitbags with such goodies as a shirt and a racket. You might even look like Greg – but can you play like him?

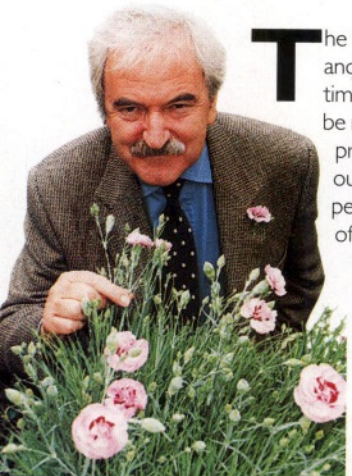
Q1. What's the official top speed of Greg's service?
Q2. Which tennis clothing and racket manufacturer does Greg prefer to use?
Q3. Which is Greg's stronger tennis hand – left or right?

If you think you know the answers, enter the competition at *www.freeserve.net/competitions* **by midnight, Friday 4 Feb. Good luck!**

Clive Brunskill

The Promise land

Freeserve is powering a nationwide campaign to make the world a better place



Des: Kind to all things (nearly)

The New Year is upon us, and as on every 1 Jan it's time for resolutions to be made. We all do it: promise to make ourselves a better person, then spend half of January battling to keep up the pretence before quietly letting it drop way before Valentine's Day.

This year brings even more expectation to make things better. The advent of the new millennium is even more of a reason to improve our lives and those of others. But what if you need some help to keep to your word?

Fear not for your resolutions, as Freeserve is riding in to help you stick to your promise. Freeserve is powering the ITV Year of Promise initiative, UK television's longest-ever on-screen promotional campaign.

The Year of Promise sees several major celebs trying their best to improve the world by making – and sticking to – a simple promise. It could be a promise to help charities out or just to eat their greens, but all promises are welcome on the theory that every little helps.

Not that it's only the stars who are being asked to do their bit. The public is also welcome to join the mission to help the common good by making promises and sticking to them.

And that's where Freeserve comes in. A campaign on this scale needs not only a supremely efficient website, but also to keep a record of the thousands of promises kept.

ITV approached Freeserve to develop, produce and host the campaign's massive website at www.itvyearofpromise.co.uk. In addition, Freeserve is managing the very core of the campaign, the database containing all the promises.

So what are people promising? Stars' promises range from the daring (Bill Murray of *The Bill* will walk on the wing of an aeroplane for every charity he supports) to the personal (*Coronation Street*'s Sue Nicholls is making more time for her friends).

Ulrika checks her veg

Whatever you want to do to help, you can find more

'All promises are welcome'

B*Witched scrabble down the back of the sofa to find change for the plane

You don't have to be famous to make a promise – check the Freeserve site

YEAR OF PROMISE

itv

STARS' PROMISES

The list of good intentions

B*Witched: We will put our spare change into charity envelopes provided on planes

Helen Baxendale: I will try to be less late

Caprice: I will donate more of my time to children in need

Robson Green: I will encourage the development of youth theatres in the North East

Damon Hill: I will spend less time going round and round in circles

Ulrika Jonsson: I will always look at the price of vegetables when I am shopping

Des Lynam: I will be kind to all creatures great and small – making an exception for bluebottles

Davina McCall: I will do more to help the elderly in my area

Martine McCutcheon: I will buy the *Big Issue* every week for the homeless

Westlife: We will eat two pieces of fruit every day

Des O'Connor: I will spend a day at Great Ormond Street Hospital for children and I will do anything they ask me to

Chris Tarrant: I will record a book for blind people every year

Carol Vorderman: I will get at least 500 computers into children's hospital wards

Stephen Tompkinson: I will do all I can to encourage our writers because without them I would be speechless

Helen Lederer: I will be a voice for children with HIV

Rex Features

New Romantics

Freeserve has been leading the search for the most romantic couple in Britain

Valentines 2000
powered by freeserve
www.freeserve.net

It's getting toward that time of year where we all show our romantic side, and the shops are awash with pink cards and cuddly toys. It's a chance to demonstrate our love for the most important people in our lives, and to enjoy similar displays of affection in return.

However, while those shows of love are a reward in themselves, the return for being romantic will be much higher this year for some lucky lovers. Because one loving couple will be winning a luxury romantic holiday, while five other pairs will be treated to intimate weekend breaks!

Finding the couple of the year

How did all this come about? It's all part of the Valentines 2000 campaign, launched by *The Mirror* and powered by Freeserve. The campaign has searched Britain for the nation's most romantic couple, with Mirror readers and others asked to nominate loving couples worthy of the title.

The extensive coverage of the campaign features heartwarming tales of devotion, with childhood sweethearts who married young and stayed together through all the adversity life could throw at them, love affairs which survived separations across the miles and years, and those who went through decades of yearning before getting together.

Then there were the stories of unusual and inventive marriage proposals, those who have braved hostility to stay together, and couples who have ingeniously kept the spark going for years.

Famous lovers

All the stories of romance have been collated and judged, and the six regional winners from Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, North of England, Midlands and South of England will be present at a Celebrity Ball at the Savoy Hotel on Sunday 13 February – the night before St Valentine's Day.

Over 300 guests will attend the celebrity bash, including some famous couples. Among those invited are the Earl and Countess of Wessex, David and Victoria Beckham, Zoe Ball and Norman Cook, Hugh Grant and Liz Hurley and Denise van Outen and Jay Kay. The event will be filmed and the highlights transmitted on GMTV the following morning.

Love's labour's won

The glamorous guests will witness six charming tales of romanticism, with each couple profiled on film and briefly interviewed, before the overall winners are announced and presented with their award.

All this has been powered by Freeserve, and the idea is to make the event an annual occurence. So you'd better start getting romantic in time for next year's event!

Famous couples have been invited to join the audience as the tales of love are told

A loving couple will win a holiday

Rex Features

Image Bank

Home sweet home page

Want to set up your own home on the Web, but not sure how and where to start? Let Freeserve's **Simon Bowen** point you in the right direction

So you're surfing the Net quite happily and you can tell a good site from a bad one. There are some ugly sites out there, ones which make you think "I could do better than that". So why don't you?

It's really not that difficult to build a website, which you can dedicate to whatever you want. There are hundreds of millions of Web pages on the Net, and not all are built by brainy techies. More and more people are building their own home on-line.

Home names

When you enrol as a Freeserve member, along with the free e-mails and other benefits you get a chunky 15 megabytes of space on the Web all of your own. Don't worry, this section of cyberspace is held on Freeserve's computers so it won't clog up your machine.

As with your e-mail address, you get to choose what goes before the "freeserve.co.uk". So you could let the world know about your football team at www.wilmslowwanderers.freeserve.co.uk, or your gardening hobby at www.patspetunias.freeserve.co.uk. It's completely up to you, as long has someone else hasn't already snaffled the name. Better hurry up then.

Who for?

Ironically, you shouldn't rush to your computer; you need to have a plan. Think about what you want your website to do – advertise something? Show off your poetry, music or art? Or just let Auntie Doris in Australia see how fast the kids are growing?

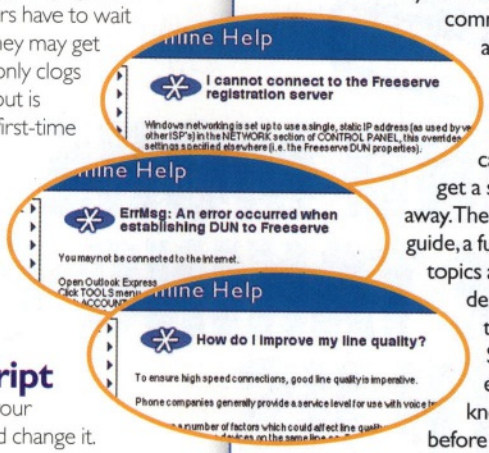
If you want a lot of people to visit your site, you'd better make it user-friendly and accessible. Rather than just posting photos of your skiing trip, why not list the area's attractions and drawbacks for potential visitors? Remember, the Net is the best research tool going and people will want to hear your views. Imagine what you'd want to read about.

Organise your stuff

Be objective, think about where the visitors to your pages will expect to find things. A good site will make the most popular content easily accessible rather than burying it in a complex, if logical, site structure. Everyone knows how frustrating it can be to have to visit three or four pages before you find what you're looking for. Put a 'home' button on every page so surfers can get back to the beginning, and once you've decided on your site structure don't change it – your frequent visitors will always know where to find stuff. Besides, changes often lead to dead links – and you know how annoying those are.

Don't be fussy

It's best to avoid cluttering your page with necessary graphics. If surfers have to wait to download your page, they may get bored and surf off. And it only clogs up your page – a clear layout is much more attractive for first-time visitors. Background files, animations and other graphics can easily make your page look fussy. Don't go for style over content.



Stick to the script

Once you've decided on your layout style, don't chop and change it. Visitors will want your site to be consistent and recognisable, so keep to the same layouts and styles so they know it's your page. Besides, changes often lead to dead links.

Put a "home" button on every page so surfers can get back to the beginning. And consider adding frames to the site – they make it much easier for visitors to navigate your site and see all you have to offer.

Bricks and mortar

As for actually building your website, once more it's all laid on for you by Freeserve. The on-line help explains how to get to grips with HTML, Zyweb and FTP. What are those? HTML – Hypertext Mark-up Language – is the language you use to create webpages, and Zyweb is a software programme (available free on the Freeserve CD) which more or less writes the HTML for you, like a set-up Wizard. Finally, FTP – File Transfer Protocol – allows you to "upload" your finished pages to the Web itself; this is done by more software available free through Freeserve.

You'll find it's all remarkably easy once you start – so what's stopping you?

Hammer out your ideas before you set to work on building your home

free serve www.freeserve.net/support

On-line help

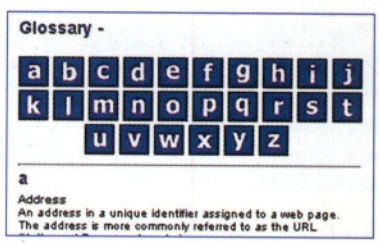
We've put together an awesome set of answers for all your technical queries. It's available on our website – and it's free!

What are my options?

If you're new to the Net, Freeserve is committed to making it as easy as possible for you to get on-line. We've designed the help section on the Freeserve website so you can turn to Freeserve and get a straight answer, straight away. There's a complete content guide, a full alphabetical index of topics and a find function – all designed to take you straight to the answer you need. Separate sections deal with everything you need to know to avoid problems before set-up, and tell you what to expect as you begin to install the software from the CD-ROM onto your machine. It really is that easy!

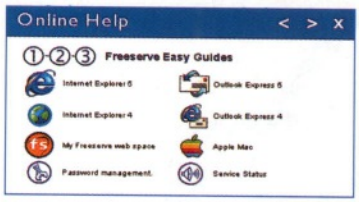
How does on-line help work?

It's easy! There are four main sources of information. Read through the descriptions below and you'll soon see which best suits the type of query you have. Then connect to Freeserve, visit the help section and get all your questions answered quickly.



The Glossary

If there's an Internet expression you don't understand, turn to our glossary first. It's more than likely to be there.



The Easy Guides

If there's an area of your Net use that is causing you difficulty, turn to our Easy Guides for a complete solution. You'll find answers sorted by subject.

Questions and Answers

If there's a specific question you need answered, turn to our Q&A section for rapid help. First select the general area from our drop-down menu, then a specific question. You may find your question has already been answered.

Contacts

If you still need help, you can e-mail our support staff. They're the same people who man our phone helpdesks, and they're trained to deal with your queries. Direct e-mail addresses are listed on the contacts page. They'll be happy to help you!

How do I find answers on the CD?

Alternatively, there's also a fully comprehensive Help feature on the Freeserve start-up CD-ROM. When you put the CD in your machine you'll be given four options. The help button takes you to a comprehensive set of instructions to enable you to get on-line with Freeserve.

Phone-line help

Our experts are on call 24 hours a day

Using Freeserve's on-line help couldn't be simpler, but from time to time you might have a direct question for one of our experts. To help you get the most out of your connection, Freeserve's Technical Support is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Make sure you've consulted our on-line help before you call, as you may find we've already answered your question. If not, our trained staff can provide you with instant answers in plain English on a range of Net subjects. Calls cost 50p per minute.

PC Support 0906 2517517 Mac 0906 7234000

MORE AND MORE PEOPLE ARE TAKING OFF WITH US

Over one million people surf the net with Freeserve. Our fast, reliable service and unique homepage provides instant benefits including:

- Top 10 CDs from £9.99 (including free UK delivery)
- Up to the minute financial & company information
- Save up to 50% on best selling books
- Keep in touch – phone to hear and reply to e-mails
- Last minute holidays and weekend breaks
- The latest news, sport, weather and much more

"I found it on freeserve"

THE UK'S No1 FOR THE INTERNET

free serve

www.freeserve.net

Join us on-line now or pick up a free CD at any branch of Dixons, PC World, Currys, The Link or @jakarta

Internet access is subject to standard local call rates.

stepbystep

From chatting online to sending email, you can find out about it here. Plus, we show you how to turn your PC into a radio station and seriously upgrade your system

Your technical problems well sorted with our easy-to-follow guide to the Net

WHAT IS THE INTERNET?

The Internet is a huge global network of computers, with literally millions of machines connected together across the planet.

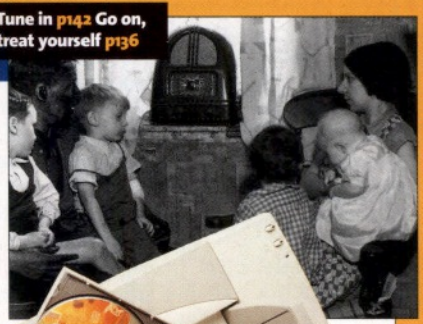
HOW DO I GET ON IT?

All you really need is a computer, a modem, an Internet Service Provider (ISP) and a telephone line.

WHAT CAN I DO THERE?

1 **Surf the Worldwide Web.**
2 Send someone an email.
3 **Take part in a newsgroup discussion.**
4 Make friends and get chatting with people from all over the world.

Tune in p142 Go on, treat yourself p136



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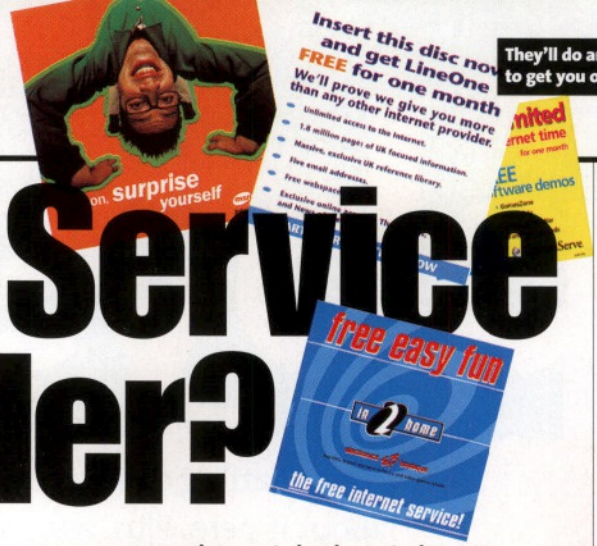


What Service Provider?

February 2000 How are you ever supposed to pick the right ISP with so many of them out there? Easy – take a look at our guide

What is an ISP?

An Internet service provider, or ISP, is a company that connects you to the Internet. All you need do is exploit the provider's permanent Net connection by connecting to it.

Get the best ISP deal

Right now, literally hundreds of ISPs are vying for your business – which is great news for consumers. But to help you make a truly informed decision, we've tested the best service providers on the market.

Below, you'll find our ratings for the current crop of the best ISPs looking to connect you. There are several companies that are now offering completely free access – and that includes the price of the phone call that connects you to the Internet. LocalTel pioneered this service back in the spring with the launch of Screaming.Net. Since then several companies have started to offer free calls to the Net at certain times of the day. CallNeto800 has also launched and is offering completely free access at any time of the day. This new breed of ISP is set to change the landscape of Net access in the UK, as several other service providers investigate the possibility of offering completely free access in a bid to keep up with new trends. In other words, the future couldn't be brighter for Net consumers, as the price of getting online continues to go down.

Call costs

It's worth checking how much you'll be paying for the phone calls that connect you to the Net. Apart from the new breed of free services, nearly every ISP charges local call rates. For BT customers, this means 4p/min on weekdays between 8am-6pm; 1.5p/min during off-peak times, and 1p/min at the weekend. Check with your phone company.

Speeding up

To say things are only going to get faster is an understatement. BT is currently trialling ADSL (Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line). It will offer an 'always on' high speed connection to the Internet with data delivery speeds of 10-40 times a conventional modem. At the moment, most modems operate at 56kbps (kilobits per second) or less. For more info see ***www.bt.com/adsl/***

BEGINNER'S TIP

Put the phone number you use to dial up to the Internet on your BT Friends and Family list.

INTERMEDIATE TIP

Set up several free accounts. If for any reason you cannot connect to one provider, simply try another one. There's no limit to how many accounts you have.

ADVANCED TIP

Consider installing an extra phone line. It means you can have one for the phone and one for your modem, so you can use the Internet as much as you like.

INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDERS

ISP NAME	WEB ADDRESS	DESCRIPTION	TYPE OF SERVICE
Aardvaak **FREE**	***www.aardvaak.co.uk***	London-based ISP which promises no banner advertising	Unlimited
AngliaNet Limited	***www.anglianet.co.uk***	Dial-up, web hosting and design for home and business users	Unlimited
AOL	***www.aol.co.uk***	A large ISP offering proprietary software to try to make connecting painless	Unlimited
Aviators Network	***www.aviators.net***	An ISP designed with aircraft-related content for the pilot and the enthusiast	Unlimited
BIGWIG **FREE**	***www.bigwig.net***	Clear and well-presented – free Internet access in a complete package	Unlimited
BREATHE **FREE**	***www.breathe.co.uk***	Well-established free ISP. Easy-to-use site design	Unlimited
Btclick.com **FREE**	***www.btclick.com***	The free Internet service from British Telecom, with no monthly charge	Unlimited
BT Internet	***www.btinternet.com***	Another Internet arm of BT offering a full access package	Unlimited
Bun **FREE**	***www.bun.com***	The free ISP offering of *The Sun* newspaper	Unlimited
Cable and Wireless Lite **FREE**	***www.cwcom.net***	Free Net access for CW customers	Unlimited
CALLNET **FREE**	***www.callnetuk.com***	Innovative free ISP offering enhanced Web-based services	Unlimited
CIX	***www.cix.co.uk***	The Compulink Information eXchange. Provides Internet conferencing accounts	Unlimited
ClaraNET Ltd	***www.clara.net***	Subscription based ISP with a range of account options to suit any needs	Unlimited
Compuserve	***www.compuserve.com***	Long-standing ISP who offers proprietary software to aid ease-of-use and level of service	Unlimited
Connect Free **FREE**	***www.connectfree.net***	One of the very first free ISPs	Unlimited
CYBERphile Internet	***www.cyberphile.co.uk***	Business-oriented, Midlands-based provider. Specialists in leased lines, LANs, firewalls, ISDN etc	Unlimited
Dabsol **FREE**	***www.dabsol.net***	Free ISP with online sign-up help and comprehensive features	Unlimited
Demon Internet	***www.demon.co.uk***	The UK's original dial-up account today aspires to be the industry's 'Premium' service	Unlimited
Direct Connection	***www.dircon.net***	Home and business ISP offering global roaming among their services	Unlimited
Easynet Ltd	***www.easynet.net***	Subscription based dial-up service. Winner of best European ISP at this year's ISPA awards	Unlimited
EidosNet **FREE**	***www.eidosnet.co.uk***	EidosNet is brought to you by Eidos, publishers of Tomb Raider and other great games	Unlimited
Enterprise plc	***www.enterprise.net***	Subscription based ISP with a host of features including game and news servers	Unlimited
F9 Free **FREE**	***www.f9.net.uk***	Free ISP from previously subscription-only service Force 9	Unlimited
Firstnet Services Ltd	***www.firstnet.co.uk***	Business Internet solution provider	Unlimited
FirstWeb	***www.first-web.co.uk***	ISP based in Middlesex. Provides Internet solutions for businesses	Unlimited
Free Internet **FREE**	***www.free-internet.co.uk***	Free access, free mail and Web space. Comprehensive service in a neat package	Unlimited
FREENET **FREE**	***www.freenet.co.uk***	More free access with a gaming bias. Online auto sign-up and newsgroups add to the interest	Unlimited
Free Online **FREE**	***www.free-online.net***	Straightforward free ISP offering news and email	Unlimited
Freeserve **FREE**	***www.freeserve.net***	Free provider from the Dixons Group of companies	Unlimited

ISPs explained Using our easy-to-follow guide

FREE CONNECTIONS
There are now many companies that will get you on to the Internet without charging a subscription fee – the only thing you pay for is the price of the phone call that connects you.

SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES
Despite the plethora of free ISPs springing up, there are still many which charge a flat monthly fee. These generally offer free technical support, whereas most free ISPs charge by the minute.

CONTENT PROVIDERS
Content providers also charge to get you online, but provide exclusive content to members, and a sense of 'community'.

How the tables work

Description
A brief description of the services offered by the ISP in question.

Type of service
Tells you whether there is any restriction on how often you can use the Internet.

Phone number
The number to ring if you want to sign up.

Email addresses
Some service providers give you only one email address, others provide as many as you want.

Content
Outlines whether the service provider in question provides its own content and whether it is exclusive to its users.

Macintosh support
Not all service providers offer software and technical support for Macs, preferring to concentrate on PCs – so be sure to check this column out if you're an Apple user.

Web space
If you are interested in designing your own Web page, most Internet Service Providers will give you space to store it on. 2Mb should be enough for most people's requirements.

Set-up fee
Some ISPs charge a fee to open an account.

Monthly charge
If you don't go with a free ISP, then you'll pay a set amount per month to be online.

Phone support charges
Technical support is great – as long as you're not having to pay a fortune to benefit from it. Find out how much free service providers charge per minute for calls to their technical support desks.

Telephone support hours
The hours when the technical support desk will be open to take your calls.

Our ISP testing is carried out by NetBasics, an independent company specialising in providing ISP information for consumers and businesses. NetBasics makes every effort to ensure that the data presented to you is correct. The publishers of *the Net* and NetBasics cannot be held liable for any damages caused by the publication of this data. Any Internet service provider that wishes to be included in the evaluation programme should contact eval@netbasics.com **For more information on NetBasics, visit its Web site at *www.netbasics.com*.**

	PHONE NUMBER	EMAIL ADDRESS	CONTENT	MAC SUPPORT	WEB SPACE	SET-UP FEE	MONTHLY CHARGE	PHONE SUPPORT CHARGES	PHONE SUPPORT HOURS
	Sign up online	1	None	No	0	0	0	Unavailable	n/a
	01473 211922	1	None	Yes	5Mb	None	11.75	Mobile	9-5 M-F, 8-9 S-S
	0800 3765432	5	Massive amount of content	Yes	10Mb	0	16.95	Free	8-10.30M-F 9-9.30S-S
	0700 2842867	1	'Flightalogue' lists a host of goodies	No	15Mb	0	11.75	Standard	9-9 7 days
	01509 651451	5	None	No	15 Mb	0	0	£1 per minute	9-9 M-F, 10-8 S-S
	0870 6006006	5	Entertainment, sport, shopping, finance etc	Yes	10Mb	0	0	50p per minute	24/7
	0800 800001	Unlimited	From Excite	Yes	0	0	0	50p per minute	8-12 Midnight
	0800 800001	5	None	Yes	10Mb	0	11.75	Local	24/7
	0845 3063636	5	Online dating, Bunshopping, *The Sun* online etc	Yes	25Mb	0	0	50p per minute	24/7
	0800 0923 001	5	Channels and account administration	No	20 Mb	0	0	National	24/7
	0171 3358300	5	Chat servers, channels, services, Web news	Yes	20Mb	0	0	Free	24/7
	0845 3555050	Unlimited	None	Yes	30Mb	0	17.61	Local call	9-10 M-F, 12-6 S-S
	0800 3582828	Unlimited	None	Yes	25Mb	0	8.99	Free	24/7
	0990 000200	5	A large range of channels and a search engine	No	10Mb	0	16.95	National	8-12 Midnight
	Sign up online	Unlimited	Channel-based content provided by Virgin	No	Unlimited	0	0	Unavailable	24/7
	01543 454840	1	None	Yes	0.1Mb	0	11.74	Standard	8.30-6 M-F
	Sign up online	Unlimited	None	No	Unlimited	0	0	Metered	24/7
	0181 3711234	Unlimited	None	Yes	20Mb	0	11.75	Local	24/7
	0800 0720000	Unlimited	User zone containing handy member services	Yes	20Mb	0	13.50	Local	9-9 7days
	0171 6814444	Unlimited	None	Yes	2Mb	0	11.99	Free	24/7
	Sign up online	Unlimited	Free access to the Mplayer games network	No	20Mb	0	0	50p per minute	24/7
	01624 677666	Unlimited	None	Yes	5Mb	0	11.75	Local	9-10 M-F 10-4 S-S
	0800 0737800	Unlimited	None	Yes	15Mb	0	0	National	7-11, 7 Days
	0113 294 4224	Unlimited	Search engines and support	Yes	10Mb	0	12.50	Local	Business hours
	0870 7409223	4	None	No	5Mb	0	7.73	Local	24/7
	Sign up online	1	Newsgroups and IE5 download	No	10Mb	0	0	Metered	24/7
	01329 511611	Unlimited	Games links and independent status	Yes	20Mb	0	0	National rates	9-6 7 days
	0870 7060504	5	None	Yes	Unlimited	0	0	Premium rate	24/7
	0990 500049	Unlimited	Extensive channel based content	Yes	15Mb	0	0	50p per minute	24/7

INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDERS

ISP NAME	WEB ADDRESS	DESCRIPTION	TYPE OF SERVICE
Free to You **FREE**	***www.freezyou.co.uk***	No frills free ISP with online sign-up	Unlimited
Freewire **FREE**	***www.freewire.net***	Free ISP with no sign-up requirements	Unlimited
Freezone **FREE**	***www.freezone.co.uk***	A free ISP offering the usual package in a smart format	Unlimited
Gateway 2000 **FREE**	***www.ukgateway.net***	An ISP service from the hardware retailers of the same name. Packaged with Gateway computers	Unlimited
Go Free **FREE**	***www.gofree.co.uk***	Free ISP offering online sign-up, complete with helpline	Unlimited
IC24 **FREE**	***www.ic24.net***	The free ISP service of Mirror Group Newspapers	Unlimited
LineOne **FREE**	***www.lineone.net***	British Telecom's Internet service has recently dropped its subscription charge	Unlimited
London Web Comm Ltd	***www.londonweb.net***	An emphasis on corporate clientele. Useful London Local Directory	Unlimited
Netcom	***www.netcom.net.uk***	A comprehensive range of services to the home and business user	Unlimited
OrbitalNet **FREE**	***www.orbitalnet.co.uk***	Offers Web design, and domain hosting and registration	Unlimited
Paradise Internet Network Service	***www.pins.co.uk***	Paradise Internet is a subscription provider which also authors software	Unlimited
Screaming.net **FREE**	***www.screaming.net***	The pioneer of the free access and free phone call model	Unlimited
Sonnet Internet Ltd	***www.sonnet.co.uk***	Packages and solutions for the private and business user	Unlimited
This is it! **FREE**	***www.thisisit.co.uk***	End-user targeted free ISP	Unlimited
UK Fantastic **FREE**	***www.ukfantastic.net***	Spirited free ISP offering good online technical help	Unlimited
UK Online Ltd **FREE**	***www.ukonline.co.uk***	A family friendly free ISP with plenty of shareware and gaming software. Sign up online	Unlimited
UK People **FREE**	***www.ukpeople.net***	Free ISP, online chat, set-up and help	Unlimited
Virgin Net **FREE**	***www.virgin.net***	Long-standing ISP now offering a stylish free Internet access service	Unlimited
Which? Online	***www.which.net***	A free ISP from the consumer affairs magazine of the same name	Unlimited
Wireplay Internet **FREE**	***www.wireplay.com***	Wireplay is an online games network offering access to Intranet-based fast games servers	Unlimited
X-Stream Network **FREE**	***www.x-stream.com***	Offers enhanced member services, such as occasional free phone calls to the Net	Unlimited

Network performance

January 2000

Independent testing carried out by NetBasics – contact eval@netbasics.com

We test the best ISPs in the country for the reliability and speed of their connection. The tests are conducted in three areas and a star rating is given indicative of their performance. The three areas of testing are:

VARIATION IN MODEM SPEED

This is a gauge to measure whether you get a constant speed once a modem connects to an ISP. ISPs should offer a constant speed and we measure any variation. Each ISP starts with 100 percent and loses position the greater the variance in connection. This is achieved by comparison so that no ISP is favoured above others.

VARIATION IN TIME TO CONNECT

This section of the test measures the variation in how long it takes to get connected to your ISP. The reading is taken from the stage between clicking 'Connect' and then physically connecting.

AVAILABILITY

There's nothing more frustrating than dialling your ISP and finding you can't actually get through and on to the Net. This area measures how many times an ISP refuses to connect, either through the engaged tone, or if it does not respond correctly to modem signals. The results are combined into a single reading giving us a fair way to chart ISPs based on relevant aspects of their dial-in service. The results shown in the chart are based on a sample of 50 ISPs from ongoing tests.

1	BT Internet	★★★★★	26	Free Online	★★★★
2	Netcom	★★★★★	27	Bun	★★★★
3	AngliaNet Limited	★★★★★	28	Freeserve	★★★★
4	LineOne	★★★★★	29	Compuserve	★★★
5	Wireplay Internet	★★★★★	30	Dabsol	★★★
6	Enterprise plc	★★★★★	31	AOL	★★★
7	Easynet Ltd	★★★★★	32	X-Stream	★★★
8	Direct Connection	★★★★★	33	Breathe	★★★
9	Eisdosnet	★★★★★	34	Demon Internet	★★★
10	Firstnet	★★★★★	35	Virgin Net	★★★
11	This is it!	★★★★★	36	Clara Net	★★★
12	Aviator's Network	★★★★★	37	UK Online	★★★
13	Cyberphile	★★★★★	38	Screaming.net	★★★
14	Free to You	★★★★★	39	CIX	★★★
15	Callnet	★★★★★	40	Which? Online	★★★
16	Free Internet	★★★★	41	Freezone	★★★
17	Freenet	★★★★	42	Orbital Net	★★★
18	London Web Com	★★★★	43	Cable and Wireless	★★★
19	Freewire	★★★★	44	IC24	★★★
20	Sonnet Internet	★★★★	45	Connect Free	★★
21	Gateway 2000	★★★★	46	UK Fantastic	★★
22	Go Free	★★★★	47	UK People	★★
23	Paradise	★★★★	48	Aardvark	★★
24	BT Click	★★★★	49	First Web	★★
25	F9 Free	★★★★	50	Bigwig	★★

what service provider?

PHONE NUMBER	EMAIL ADDRESS	CONTENT	MAC SUPPORT	WEB SPACE	SET-UP FEE	MONTHLY CHARGE	PHONE SUPPORT CHARGES	PHONE SUPPORT HOURS
Sign up online	Unlimited	Search engine page and technical support	No	10Mb	0	0	Available soon	n/a
Sign up online	Unlimited	None	No	50Mb	0	0	50p per minute	24/7
0870 7441111	Unlimited	On-site search engine access	No	20Mb	0	0	50p per minute	24/7
At Gateway Stores	Unlimited	None	No	10Mb	0	0	Free	24/7
Sign up online	Unlimited	None	No	20Mb	0	0	Metered	24/7
0870 9090262	Unlimited	Channel based content with news, sport, weather	No	10Mb	0	0	50p per minute	24/7
0800 111210	5	News, shopping, sport, community etc	Yes	10Mb	0	0	50p per minute	8-Midnight M-Sa
0181 3494500	3	None	Yes	5Mb	17.63	14.68	Standard	9-9 M-Sa
0870 5668008	20	A business oriented portal site	Yes	25Mb	0	14.95	National	24/7
0800 389 1397	5	Coming soon	Yes	5Mb	0	0	Local	Business hours
01256 414863	1	None	Yes	2Mb	17.63	9.40	National	11-7 M-F
Sign up at Tempo	Unlimited	Travel, entertainment, business, sport etc	No	10Mb	0	0	50p per minute	24/7
0171 8912000	Unlimited	None	Yes	5Mb	0	12.50	National	9-9 M-S
0906 9124000	Unlimited	None	No	20Mb	0	0	£1 per minute	24/7
Sign up online	Unlimited	None	Yes	5Mb	0	0	£1 per minute	24/7
01749 333333	1	None	Yes	Unlimited	0	0	50p per minute	24/7
Sign up online	Unlimited	An online community, games and downloads	No	5Mb	0	0	50p per minute	24/7
0500 558800	5	Several Virgin channels	Yes	10Mb	0	0	50p per minute	24/7
0645 830240	1	Online shopping and consumer affairs content	Yes	2Mb	11.75	14.75	Free	24/7
0845 757 7577	0	Games news, games chat, games add-ons	No	0	0	0	50p per minute	12pm-12 am, 7 days
0870 7306466	1	Chat, news, lifestyle, shopping, etc	No	20Mb	0	0	50p per minute	24/7

ISP NEWS IN BRIEF All the service provider news you need

Free for some

CallNeto8oo has reopened its call centre after suspending registrations to its free access and free phone call ISP. The service was overwhelmed by registrations when it was launched. CallNeto8oo predicts that 200,000 people will be using its service by the end of 1999. ***www.callneto8oo.com***

Users also get free domain name registration and an online design service. ***www.GoThere.uk.com***

GreatXscape cut-off

GreatXscape is introducing a two-hour cut-off for users of its toll-free service, in an attempt to stop people hogging the network by staying online for hours. Users are at liberty to immediately reconnect. The move comes just after the ISP announced it is limiting the amount of free calls to the Net to 20 hours a month. ***www.greatxscape.co.uk***

Primed and ready

Telecommunications company Primus has launched its own free service provider. Primus Internet offers a mix of content and Web space, and phone service subscribers benefit from cheap national and international calls. ***www.iprimus.co.uk***

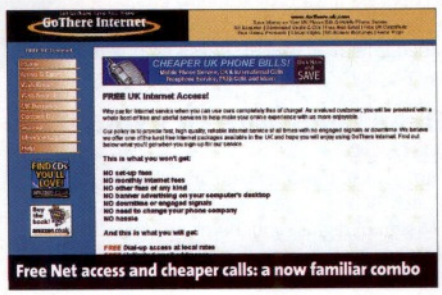
A little something for the weekend?

Weekend warrior

The Go-Free service provider owned by Johnston Press is offering free 0800 Internet access at weekends. From 6pm on Friday until midnight on Sunday, calls to the Internet are free and there is no need to change telecommunications company to take advantage of the offer. ***www.gofree.to***
www.johnstonpress.co.uk

You might as well go there

As well as free Internet access, GoThere Internet is offering a free mobile phone connection and a Smart Box enabling users to make savings on UK and International phone calls, without having to change phone suppliers.



Free Net access and cheaper calls: a now familiar combo

Beef up your PC

And you thought you needed a new computer. These hardware upgrades will have your PC singing for joy

We've heard it all before. You've had your PC for a while. Maybe you've even considered trading it in for another model with a go-faster chip, or perhaps even a garish iMac.

Well, you could go out and blow your hard-earned on a brand-spanking-new system, but stop and think for a while. Wouldn't forking out on a serious upgrade be more effective at coping with your increasing demands? Whether your budget is £100 or £1000, there's a whole load of goodies you can bolt on to your computer that will transform that dull old box into a multimedia monster, a desktop publishing system second to none, or a gamer's total dream machine.

To that end, we've put together a mouth-watering selection of kit based around three price points, kicking off with a bargain range of goodies all at less than £100 each.

All are available at these prices from your nearest PC World store. And if you don't know where that is, check out the storefinder at ***www.pcworld.co.uk***. Now get upgrading!

UNDER £100 APIECE

The Hival CD-RW drive is the most useful bargain of this lot, enabling you to burn your own music CDs and backup important data

Hival CD-RW £100

Though not the fastest rewritable CD drive on the planet (but then speed costs), this is nevertheless a versatile internal drive. It can burn CDs at 2x, but can also operate as a 24x CD-ROM drive. It comes with the flexible Easy CD Creator software package, which makes burning your own CDs, music or otherwise, a walk in the park.

Voodoo 3 2000 PCI £79.99

If you've got a slightly aging PC (anything over a couple of years) then this graphics card will enable you to enter the modern era without a costly motherboard upgrade. Fast, versatile and extremely powerful, the Voodoo 3 will both boost games performance and streamline Windows functionality.

Umax Astra 2000 £79.99

Cheap but incredibly powerful, the Astra 2000 is a flatbed scanner that runs at resolutions as high as 600x1200dpi. Import treasured photos or turn your home or office into a paperless nirvana by scanning bills, receipts, invoices or even recipe ideas and storing them on your PC. Uses a standard parallel port, so works well with older PCs.

Hauppauge Win TV Radio £99.99

Turn your PC into a real multimedia workstation. Watch TV on your desktop, listen to the radio (in FM stereo), digitise your home movies with the S-Video socket and catch up with the news on Teletext. It even comes with a remote control. Note: requires a PC capable of bus mastering.

Microsoft Sidewinder Precision Pro £49.99

Not to be confused with the hideously expensive force-feedback version, this excellent stick is the perfect accompaniment to any flight sim or one of the big robot games, such as Mech Warrior 3. Digital and accurate, it connects to a standard soundcard gameport and comes with great drivers.

WORDS: ANDY HUTCHINSON; PHOTOS: NICK WRIGHT

UNDER £300

Once you get into this price bracket you can add some great peripherals. Splash out on an Encore 6x DVD drive or put together a package of cheaper items...

FLYER'S DELIGHT £297.98

Voodoo 3 3000 £129

An advanced AGP card that can seriously boost the frame rates (and therefore smoothness) you experience in games. Equally at home with 3D action games like Unreal Tournament, the Voodoo will also make Windows usage faster and less of a strain on the eyes thanks to high resolutions and quick refresh rates.

Logitech Wingman Extreme £29.99

Logitech is one of the major PC controller manufacturers, with solid and very well supported products. No exception, the Wingman Extreme is popular with flight sim fans thanks to its precise mechanism and vast array of configurable buttons.

Microsoft Flight Sim 2000 £39.99

This is used as a training tool for prospective pilots due to its realism and attention to detail. Flying everything from a Sopwith Camel to Concorde, this amazing simulation can download weather info from the Net and incorporate it into your flight.

Microsoft Digital Speakers £99

PC speakers have come a long way since the days of the manky beige pepper pot. These Microsoft digital puppies come with a monster sub-woofer for real wallop in the low end of your games, but sound equally at home with music.

DVD DREAM £258.99

Creative DVD Encore 6x £159

Instead of buying a dedicated DVD player, why not add DVD to your PC and enjoy the best of both worlds. Capable of playing back DVDs on your monitor or TV and outputting the sound in full AC-3 (6 speaker) surround sound, this superb package comes with a hardware decoder card and a DVD-ROM drive.

SoundBlaster Live! Value and Creative 4 Point Surround Speakers £99.99

From the best soundcard range on the market, the SB Live! Value brings a whole new dimension to your PC audio. Capable of outputting sound to multi-speaker systems, the Live! also adds real-time effects to games, boosting that 'being there' feel. It's also a superb card for anyone who wants to make music on their PC. The excellent Creative speakers work brilliantly with the SB Live! soundcard, offering full surround sound effects to games. Hear gun shots whistling overhead and footsteps creeping up behind you.

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UNDER £1000

Spend some money on decent peripherals for your existing PC and you extend its shelf life, while expanding your own creative options. Take this desktop publishing package, for example

THE 'MURDOCH' £976.99

HP DeskJet 880c £179

Hewlett Packard produce superb peripherals, and this colour inkjet printer is no exception. Capable of churning out pages nearly as fast as a laser printer and operating at resolutions up to 600x600dpi, it's the perfect home office colour printer.

Fuji MX 2700 Digital Camera £499

Kiss goodbye to expensive film developing forever, with this superb compact digital camera. With a 2.3 million pixel CCD (which captures beautifully crisp images) and a funky built-in TV display, the MX 2700's performance is as good as its looks. Transfer your images to your PC with the supplied software and add them to your brochures or Web sites.

Paintshop Pro 6 £99.99

An extremely adaptable graphics retouching package, Paintshop is nearly as good as the ultra-expensive Photoshop. Scan images directly into the program and sharpen them, add text or special effects and then save them in your desired format.

HP Scanjet 5200C £199

Flexibility is the key strength of this excellent scanner. It can plug into either parallel or USB ports (the latter is recommended for reasons of speed) and comes with excellent software including Adobe Photodeluxe and Pagekeeper. Capable of scanning at up to 600x1200dpi in 32-bit colour, the Scanjet also comes with some of the best drivers we've ever used.

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*Optional feature available at an extra cost from early Autumn 1999 ** Does not include charges for connection, installation or subscription.

GVC 19-inch Monitor £299

Most PCs are crippled by being supplied with small and inferior monitors. Upgrade to a nice big monitor like this 19-inch example and you can play games in much higher resolutions, without them looking like postage stamps. Weighing in at a very reasonable price-point, this high-resolution monitor has good clarity and neat styling.

Voodoo 3 3500 £199

Capable of chucking the most complex gaming scenes around like they were wire-frames, the Voodoo 3 3500 is a very powerful graphics card. With the right monitor it can display games in resolutions beyond 1152x864 and positively thrives on graphics-intensive titles like Quake 3 Arena.

UNDER £1000

Transform your games by treating them to the latest video cards, stacks of RAM and some decent controllers

GAME HEAVEN £935.98

Microsoft Sidewinder Force Feedback Wheel £99

When it comes to racing games, joystick and mouse controls just don't cut it. What you need is a steering wheel like you get on the best arcade machines. Featuring both wheel and pedals, the Sidewinder is the only controller to consider if you want the best for your PC. Its realistic feel stomps all over the cheaper ones, and with the force feedback, you'll feel every lump and bump in the road.

Saitek Cyborg 3D Joystick £39.99

For all your shoot-'em-up requirements, the Cyborg should serve you brilliantly. Bristling with configurable buttons and complete with a throttle control (perfect for those flight sims and space games), it's also one of the most comfortable joysticks we've ever taken for a spin.

128Mb SDRAM £199.99

The single best way to improve your PC's performance is to add more memory to it. If you've only got 32Mb or 64Mb you're seriously crippling your machine's capabilities, especially with the size of Windows applications these days; add an extra 128Mb and Windows will speed up a great deal, won't need to be constantly shovelling data around on your hard disk, and will be able to keep bigger documents and more applications open at the same time. Your games will get a speed boost, too. Remember, you can never have too much RAM.

Microsoft Digital Speakers £99

A second appearance for these ultra-cool speakers. Make sure you get to hear every last scream as you frag Bots into the small hours.

Pa just wouldn't stop annoying the primitive Dalek

Play Misty for me

From sound effects to full-blown Internet radio, Steve Shipside shows how to drag your dusty old Web site kicking and screaming into audio mode. Time to move over, Mr Evans

If music be the food of love, then Net sound used to be more of a light snack than a four-course meal. The bleeps, burps and crackly babble that emerged when you squeezed audio down a dial-up line used to mean that only a few years ago it was good for occasional system noises but little else.

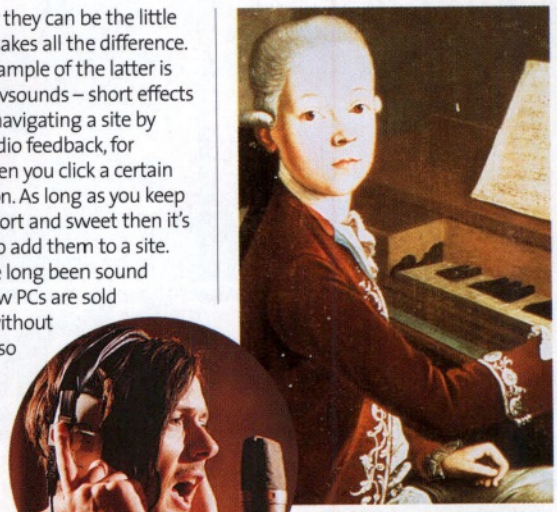
My, how time flies. The huge advances in streaming audio and the corset-like constrictions of the latest compression algorithms have combined to bring us sweet, sweet music over even a 28.8K modem. You can browse sites to the tune of background music, catch up on samples of the latest hits, or tune in to Radio Agrovia in Switzerland (possible, but not recommended). The music business is afraid that the Net will take over from record shops, and the BBC is predicting that streaming media will outstrip TV and radio combined within five years. So how come your own site sits sulking mutely amongst all this song and dance?

Adding sound effects or even full-blown Net radio is not as difficult as you might think. The hurdles are no longer the tools or the complexity, but more the delicate issues of good taste and copyright law. The fact that more and more sites offer sound also brings with it the daily confirmation that just because you can do something, doesn't mean you should. Music hath charms to soothe a savage breast but it can be a right headache for unsuspecting office surfers, and if you don't have the rights to that tune you're playing, you'll find it doesn't do a lot to soothe savage solicitors either.

Simple sound effects can be astonishingly annoying (think of the 'tada.wav' file that opens with

Windows), or they can be the little touch that makes all the difference. One good example of the latter is the use of navsounds – short effects that help in navigating a site by providing audio feedback, for example, when you click a certain type of button. As long as you keep these files short and sweet then it's no big deal to add them to a site.

Macs have long been sound savvy, and few PCs are sold these days without sound cards so hardware poses no problems. However, since sound files eat storage for breakfast you'll need hearty hard disk space or removable drives like an Iomega Zip or Jazz. There's no shortage of software for recording and editing sound files. Macromedia's SoundEdit or Sonic Foundry's SoundForge are market leaders, but shareware such as SoundGadget Pro 32-bit for the PC and SoundHack for the Mac may well do all you need. For sound files there are plenty doing the rounds as clip media, or you can take a microphone, plug it into your sound card and do your own.



Cocker: loud

Mozart: deaf. Blackburn: available for knitting patterns

Of course, you can also slap your favourite CD Audio in the CD-ROM drive and sample that, but be warned: unauthorised reproduction counts as piracy and the MCPS (Mechanical Copyright Protection Society) will take a dim view.

Having chose what you want to sample, the software will prompt you to choose a sampling rate and bit rate. Sampling, measured in kHz, means how many times a second it will be sliced into morsels – the more slices, the higher the fidelity. Bit rate means how much data will be allocated to each sample, which in turn dictates the dynamic range (from loud to soft). CD quality is 16-bit, 44.1 kHz, stereo. Stick that on your site and you can kiss goodbye to server space, your ISP, and any visitors you used to have.

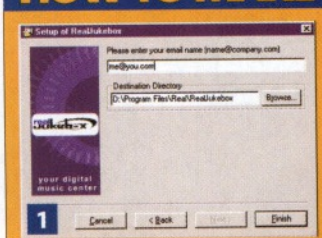
Instead try juggling the quality/file size compromise – suck it and see is the only sure way, but as a general rule 22 kHz, 16 bits, mono, will be all you need for music; and 11 kHz, 8 bits, mono, is all you need for speech. If you balk at the 'mono' bit, bear in mind the tinny little speakers that adorn the average PC.

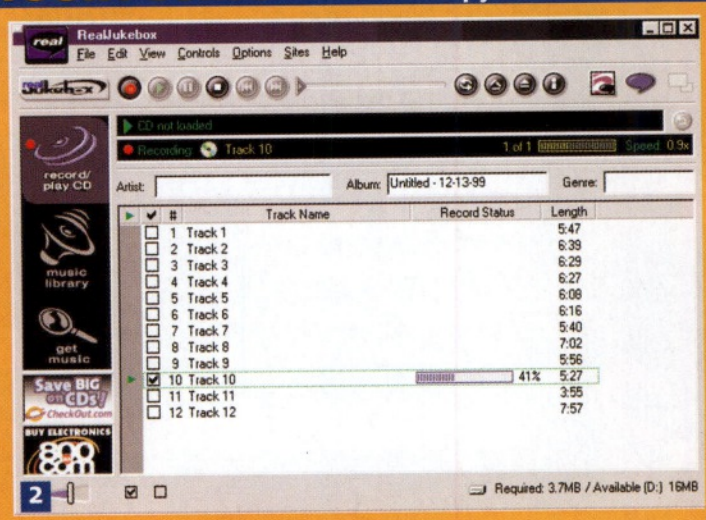
Now all you have to do is place it on the page. For those of you who find HTML scary, and who's to blame you, look away now. Say you've chosen to embed a sound file called welcome.wav. Open your HTML editor, and type in <A HREF= "welcome.wav">A sound . That's just created an underscored link called 'A sound'. You may of course choose to use more imagination in your link names, but that's the basic approach. To have a file play when someone hits the page, you'll need to start using the 'embed', 'autostart' and 'hidden' tags with the commands 'autostart=true', and 'hidden=true'. Do us all a favour – if you're going to have files that play automatically, put that command at the end of the page script otherwise visitors may have to wait for the sound file to load before seeing the page.

It's because people got bored of waiting for such files to download and play that streaming audio came to be. The crucial difference between streamed and non-streamed files is

HOW TO MAKE YOUR PC SING

Your own desktop jukebox is a few clicks away – and it records, too





HERE WE GO

1 Log on to *www.real.com* and select jukebox download option.

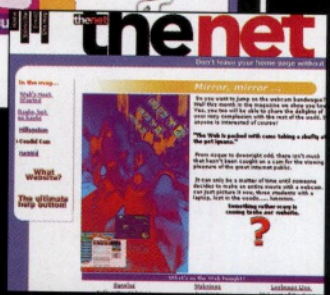
2 You can play or record from a CD but beware copyright, of course.

3 Build a master library of music and hold tracks by genre, artist or whatever category.

4 The jukebox interface sits on your desktop while you work.

THE MAG'S ONLY HALF THE STORY

You can have one without the other, but why would you want to? *the net's* Web site is the ideal complement to the printed magazine with masterclasses, technical advice and links to every URL featured in the mag. Here's how to use it...



WHY SPEND HOURS typing in Web addresses from the magazine, when the links from this month's WhatWebsite? listings can be found on our site? You'll find every category neatly sorted and fully searchable. It took work, so use it!

PLUS! This month on the site

BUY, BUY, BUY! Can the Internet get you a better car deal than Arfur Daley?
SELL, SELL, SELL! Direct links to the sites that helped our online trader make his 'fortune'
SPOT THE MONKEY Continuing Mail Monkey's assault on the nation's Webcams

www.thenetmag.co.uk

Don't leave your homepage without it thenet

Hookey was desperate to win her back

Satan liked to meet the DJs personally

that while the latter have to be downloaded whole before they can be played, the former start to play the beginning even before the end has reached you. If the Net traffic isn't too bad, this can even mean continuous play, and at that point, hey presto, you've got the possibility of Net radio.

Those little wav files embedded here and there will do just fine for the plinks, plonks, and 'hello mums', but for the real deal you're going to have to start looking at streamed audio. Four years ago that was simple – it meant Progressive Networks, soon to be renamed as Real. You used the Real encoder, and delivered to Real players, all available from their site. Then a year ago the MP3 wave hit the Net and many users switched to players like Shockwave that were quicker to adopt the new audio standard. Fortunately, Real has responded with RealJukebox which burns, plays, and sequences MP3s as well as RealMedia streamed content. Apple, too, has thrown its hat into the ring with QuickTime v4.

So which one should you go for when Webcasting audio? We asked the people who've been there and done that over at Ginger/Virgin Radio (***www.virginradio.com***). 'Three years ago it was difficult to set up online radio, but now with all the tools it's really easy', explains Mike Hales, managing editor of Ginger Online. 'We offer three different routes – Microsoft Windows Media Player, Real, and QuickTime. All three have their strengths – Real is stable run on a Linux platform, Media Player is very stable under Windows, with good codecs for audio at low rates, and QuickTime is new to streaming but offers fantastic interactivity because of the way it's built.'

Ginger Online knows a little about interaction having built their own Ginger Interactive Media Player, the GIMP, to allow Net radio listeners to see the album cover of the current track, send requests to DJs, or even buy the song. You don't have to go as far as bringing out your own GIMP to do all this, says Hales. 'Doing it live 24/7 is a bit different, but if that's not your goal then you can do this pretty easily – we hear of hospital radio doing up to eight hours online and it doesn't have to cost much.'

This just leaves the legal position, where things aren't so simple. There are a number of bodies shouldering each other out of the way to lay down the law on the rights to broadcast and the cost per play, and for the moment they haven't come to an enforceable agreement. Hence Net radio stations are springing up left right and centre.

Chances are that won't last forever, but the good news is that the industry itself doesn't seem to want to lumber online radio with heavy costs. As Mike Hales reports: 'The music bodies haven't decided how to go about it yet. One proposed a fee of ten pence per play but the others said no way so it's all up in the air. They seem to be happy to let you get on with it – for the moment at least. Until they define some hard and fast rules though, I'd definitely let them know about what you're doing.'

So there you go – if the coast isn't actually clear, at least the waters are muddied enough for you to have a go. Of course, it will be the Webcaster's responsibility to keep their ears to the wires for announcements if they don't want to end up of a licensing wrangle, but for the moment, if you want to play that special song for someone, go ahead.

TUNE IN HERE

KEYT1 250
www.broadcast.com/radio/talk/keytam
Tune into the sound of Santa Barbara where 'news comes first'.

CHRISTIAN PULPIT
www.christianpulpit.com
'A pulpit heard around the world', plus 'the Talking Bible'.

RADIO SPACE
www.radiospace.com
Click on a huge map of the US for a station nowhere near you.

RADIO NEPAL
www.catmando.com/news/radio-nepal
You don't have to be a Sherpa to appreciate this, but it helps.

ANETSTATION.COM
www.advice-net.com
The world's most remote Net station, broadcasting from Antarctica.

SONIC SITES

REAL.COM
www.real.com Features a handy finder for Internet radio stations around the world.

LIQUID AUDIO
www.liquidaudio.com
Includes tools for online audio, plus a finder for live events and channels.

SUBBAND SOFTWARE
www.subband.com
Download AMP Radio, a streaming media player for the Macintosh.

SONIC FOUNDRY
www.sfoundry.com
Plenty of audio tools here, like a Siren jukebox complete with reverb.

GREEN WITCH
www.greenwitch.com
This rival format to Real's site offers an MP3-based Net radio toolkit.

Web browsers

What do all those buttons on your browser do? And is there more to life than Explorer and Navigator? Your browser questions answered

What do I use to explore the Web?

The software you use to look at pages on the Web is called a 'browser'. The most popular are Microsoft Internet Explorer and Netscape Navigator. If you have a PC running Windows 95 or 98, you will almost certainly have Internet Explorer already installed. However, Navigator and other browsers such as Opera run in much the same way.

What are my options?

Statistically, Internet Explorer is the most popular browser on the planet. Together with its nearest competitor, Netscape Navigator, it accounts for 97 percent of all Web page hits.

With the facilities that the two offer, it's hardly surprising that they rule the roost. Internet Explorer 5.0 is the current leader of the Internet pack. It's packed – jam-packed, in fact – with features.

Netscape Navigator 4.08 represents the only serious competition to Internet Explorer. But it still can't reach the dizzying heights of IE – in fact it's slipped so much in popularity that Web site designers now often make sure their pages look right in IE alone.

You would've thought that with the market pretty much sewn up between the big two, no-one would be foolhardy enough to attempt to write a rival browser – but there are others. Opera, for example, is a tiny little thing at 1.5Mb (compared with Netscape Communicator's 10Mb+). It's fast, but it's let down by an ugly appearance. The Opera equivalent for Macs is iCab. It has many of the excellent features of Opera, but it looks and works even better.

If you want a real rebel browser, try Lynx. It's text only, so it cuts down on download times. For children (or adults who are kids at heart), there's Surf Monkey, which lets you blow up Web pages you don't like, or gloop green paint all over them.

Saving sites in Internet Explorer

Typing in the name of a Web site every time you want to visit it can be a pain – especially if it's a long and complex name. Fortunately, all Web browsers have a way of saving the locations of sites you like, so you can revisit them without needing to retype them. In Internet Explorer these saved site addresses are called Favourites, while Netscape Navigator calls them Bookmarks.

1 From the Favourites menu, choose 'Add to Favourite.' The keyboard shortcut for the move is Control D.

2 When asked whether you want to subscribe to the site, choose the 'No, just add this page to my Favourites' option. You'll see the title of the page in the 'Name' section of the site; if this is not descriptive enough for you, type a five- or six-word description of the site. Then hit OK.

3 You will now find that the site has been added to your Favourites menu. To visit the site, just click 'Favourites' and then go to the menu list and select it.

Supercharge your browser

Your basic Internet Explorer set-up comes with several 'plug-ins'. These are additional pieces of software which enable your browser to play, for example, multimedia effects. If you arrive at a site requiring a plug-in that you don't have, you'll be prompted to download and install it. The essential plug-ins you'll need to get the most from your browsing include: RealPlayer, which lets you watch videos or listen to music; Shockwave, for animation and sound (as shown right); and QuickTime, which plays video and sound.

Installing a plug-in

1 When you visit a site requiring a plug-in, a prompt appears. Click 'Get Plug-in' and you'll be taken to the plug-in's home page.

2 Click on the link where you can 'Get' or 'Download' the plug-in.

3 Explorer will automatically put the plug-in inside the correct folder on your PC.

4 Go back to the Web site by pressing the Back button on the Explorer toolbar and enjoy it in its full glory.

Browser alternatives

Proof that there's more to browsing than Explorer or Netscape

MAC BROWSERS

BROWSER	RATING	FOR	AGAINST	DOWNLOAD FROM
ICAB	★★★★	Fast. Gets rid of irritating ad banners	Could support more features	www.icab.de
HOTJAVA	★★	Pretty showcase for Java technology	Slow; somewhat unstable	java.sun.com/products/hotjava/3.0/
INTERNET EXPLORER	★★★★	State-of-the-art browsing on the Mac	Can be memory-hungry	www.microsoft.com/Mac/IE/
LYNX	★★★★	Blazingly fast at fact-finding	If it isn't text, Lynx isn't interested	www.lirmm.fr/~gutkneco/maclynx/
NETSCAPE NAVIGATOR	★★★	It's almost as good as IE...	Doesn't display pages as prettily as IE	www.netscape.com

PC BROWSERS

AMAYA	★★	Great for those into Net standards...	...not for those who aren't	www.w3.org/Amaya/User/BinDist.html
ARACHNE	★★	It runs in DOS and is written by Czechs	A pain to set up	arachne.cz
CUSTOM BROWSER	★	Adds minimal extra customisation to IE	It's just IE with an ad in the top panel	www.custombrowser.com
HOTJAVA	★★	Pretty showcase for Java technology	Slow, though not as bad as on the Mac	java.sun.com/products/hotjava/3.0/
INTERNET EXPLORER	★★★★★	For the moment, the king of all browsers	Hard to fault, unless you really try	www.microsoft.com
LYNX	★★★★	The original text-only browser	If it isn't text, Lynx isn't interested	lynx.browser.org
MOSAIC	★★★	Good for developers	Feels old. Is old. Not updated since 1996	www.ncsa.uiuc.edu/SDG/Software/mosaic-w/
NEOPLANET	★★★★	Funky interface replacement for Explorer	Internet Explorer in new clothes	www.neoplanet.com
NETSCAPE NAVIGATOR	★★★★	Wide range of features for hardcore users	Doesn't display pages as prettily as IE	www.netscape.com
OPERA	★★★★	Faster than IE or Netscape	Looks absolutely horrible	www.opera.com
SURF MONKEY	★★★★★	Lots of fun – blowing up sites is great	Designed for smaller screens?	www.surfmonkey.com

*free 30-day trial version available

What all those browser buttons mean

Understanding the toolbar

BACK Clicking this button takes you back to the last page. Click it once and you'll go back one page, or hold to see the last 10

STOP If you decide that you don't want to view a page while it's loading, just hit Stop

HOME This button takes you to the page you viewed when you started your browser

FAVOURITES Pop-up window containing a list of your Favourite sites – or you can view them from the menu

MAIL Opens your email program

PRINT Prints the page

GO When you've entered an address, hit Enter or click here to go to the site
LINKS A quick shortcut to some of your favourite sites, which you can add to

FORWARD If you've used the Back button to move back a page or two, the Forward button should take you back again

REFRESH This makes the browser redraw the page on the screen – useful if you have stopped a page from loading

SEARCH This button opens Internet Explorer's search options where you'll find short-cuts to finding what you want on the Internet

HISTORY Clicking this button produces a list of all the sites visited over the past few days or weeks – so if you found a really useful page two days ago but forgot to add it to your Favourites list, you can easily find it again by looking here

EDIT If you have a Web page editor, you can edit a Web page by clicking here

RELATED SITES Launches the Explorer 'Alexa' plug-in which provides extra search options

Viewing your browser

1 TITLE BAR
Tells you the name of the site you're visiting and the program you're currently using

2 MENU BAR
The range of options you can use while navigating the Internet, including your Favourites menu

3 IE LOGO
Contains a link to the MSN home page, in case you're completely lost

4 ADDRESS
The address of the site you're opening, including the http:// prefix

5 GO BUTTON
IE5 feature: click to go to the address you've typed in (or hit the Return key)

6 LINKS BUTTON
IE5 feature: shortcut to the 'Links' option within your Favourites folder

7 WEB SITE WINDOW
The whole page you're opening, including ads and links to other sites

8 BANNER ADVERTISEMENT
Click here to visit the service advertised in this small banner

9 INDEX
What you'll find on the site. Click on an option to enter it

10 TEXT LINKS
Move your cursor to the underlined text and you'll be able to open the relevant link by clicking on it.

11 EMAIL FEEDBACK
Most Web sites allow you to send them questions and enquiries.

12 DOWNLOAD DATA
This space tells you what Explorer is doing – or which site it could open when your cursor passes over a link

JARGON BUSTERS

DOWNLOAD Retrieve a page or file from across the Internet
HOME PAGE The initial page of a site you see when you connect
HTTP Short for HyperText **TRANSFER PROTOCOL** The way your browser pulls in Web pages
WEB PAGE Web sites are divided up into 'pages'. Each page contains a link to another page, building up a 'web'
URL Short for Uniform Resource Locator. A technical term for a Web address
WWW Short for World Wide Web – found in addresses

Email

Not yet sent your first email? Then follow our guide to Outlook Express

What is email?

Email is a way of sending messages around the Internet. While early programs could only handle plain text, most can now carry pictures and even video clips and sound.

So why should I use it?

➤ It's a lot cheaper to email a friend than to phone them long distance.
➤ It's delivered almost instantly – there's no seven-day wait if you're emailing someone on the other side of the globe.
➤ You can keep in touch with family and friends, even while they're away on business or holidays – they can visit a cybercafé and check their mail from there.
➤ Many companies now rely on email as a means of communication because it's much faster and cheaper than ordinary or 'snail mail'.
➤ You can have information on your favourite subjects – whether it's fishing, the stock market, or a TV programme – delivered to your mailbox every day.

Okay, so how do I use it?

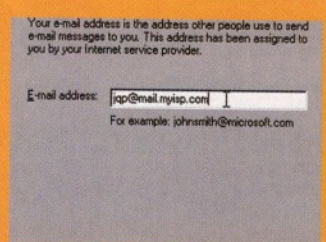
There are lots of email packages, but the one most widely used is Microsoft's Outlook Express. If you've bought a PC in the last two or three years, or you've downloaded Microsoft Internet Explorer for either Mac or PC, you'll already have Outlook Express installed. Our step-by-step guide shows you how to configure the program, create an email message, send it, and then read through the mail you've been sent.

1 Getting started with Outlook Express

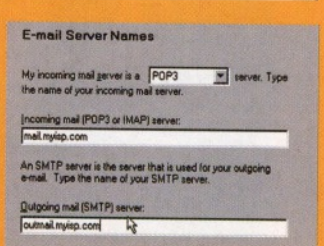
1 From the Start menu on your desktop, click Programs and then Outlook Express. If you are asked where you want it to store messages, select the pre-set or 'default' folder. The folder is kept in the Program Files folder on your hard drive.

2 Once Outlook Express has loaded, go to the Accounts box from the Tools menu, and click the Mail tab shown in the picture on the left. This will show you any mail accounts you already have set up, and allows you to create a new one. For the purposes of this exercise we are going to create a new email account. Next, click Add, and select Mail.

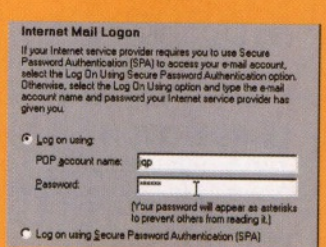
3 The Internet Connection Wizard will now guide you through the steps you need to take. First, enter your full name.



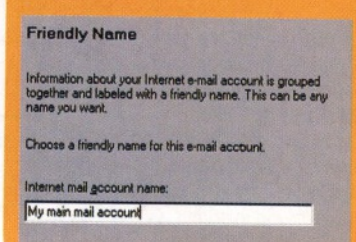
4 Type in your email address. This will have been given to you by your Internet service provider or ISP.



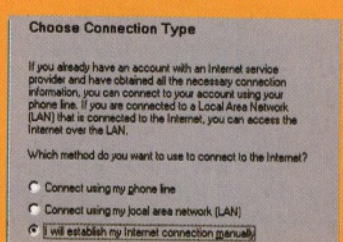
5 Enter the names of the email POP3/IMAP server in order to get incoming and outgoing mail. Call your ISP's helpline if you're unsure.



6 Type in your email address – just the part before the '@' sign – and your password. Again, your ISP should have given you these details.



7 Outlook Express asks for a 'friendly name' to give to your email account. We've called ours 'My main email account' for simplicity.



8 Outlook Express can automatically dial into your ISP for you, but it's probably best to connect manually. You can use Outlook offline, writing and managing your mail and then connect in order to send and receive messages. Choose the 'I will establish my Internet connection manually' option.

MORE EMAIL HELP AND ADVICE @ www.thenetmag.co.uk/helpbutton/

- ★ Creating an email address book
- ★ Email etiquette
- ★ Filtering your email messages
- ★ Sending pictures and files via email

BEGINNER'S TIP

Add a 'signature' to your messages. A signature is like a calling card appended to the bottom of your email message. It might contain your email address, full name and phone number. To make one, go to the Tools menu in Outlook Express, choose Options and select Stationery and click on the Signature button. Type in the signature text you want to appear at the bottom of each message.

INTERMEDIATE TIP

Often, you'll want to pass a file to someone as part of your email message. This is known as 'attaching' the file, and is supported by most email packages. Remember that a large file will take longer to send. Compressing it using a shareware package like WinZip on the PC will shrink it, but the receiver the file will need a copy of the same program to re-expand it – so check before you send.

ADVANCED TIP

You can set up several different email accounts. Outlook Express will check each one for new mail when you go online. This is useful if you have separate work and personal email accounts. To add extra accounts, go to the Tools menu, select Options and click on New Account. Go through the 'Getting Started' steps again below, entering the new settings.

EMAIL OPTIONS If you don't want to use Outlook Express, try these alternatives for size

EUDORA LIGHT

www.eudora.com

A very popular, free email package. Includes lots of great features. Doesn't support reading news-groups, but copes happily with 'rich content email' – mail that includes sound, images and so on.

✔ **Lots of features**

✘ **None**

HOTMAIL

www.hotmail.com

A Web-based email program. Gives you a free email address, and can be accessed from any computer with a Web browser. Can also check email from a non-Web-based account.

✔ **Accessed from any computer**

✘ **You need to be online to read or compose mail**

EUDORA PRO 4.2

www.eudora.com

Commercial bigger brother to Eudora Light. Has all the features of Lite, but also allows you to check your mail from several different accounts easily.

✔ **Supports multiple mailboxes, spellchacker, email filtering**

✘ **It'll set you back nearly £30**

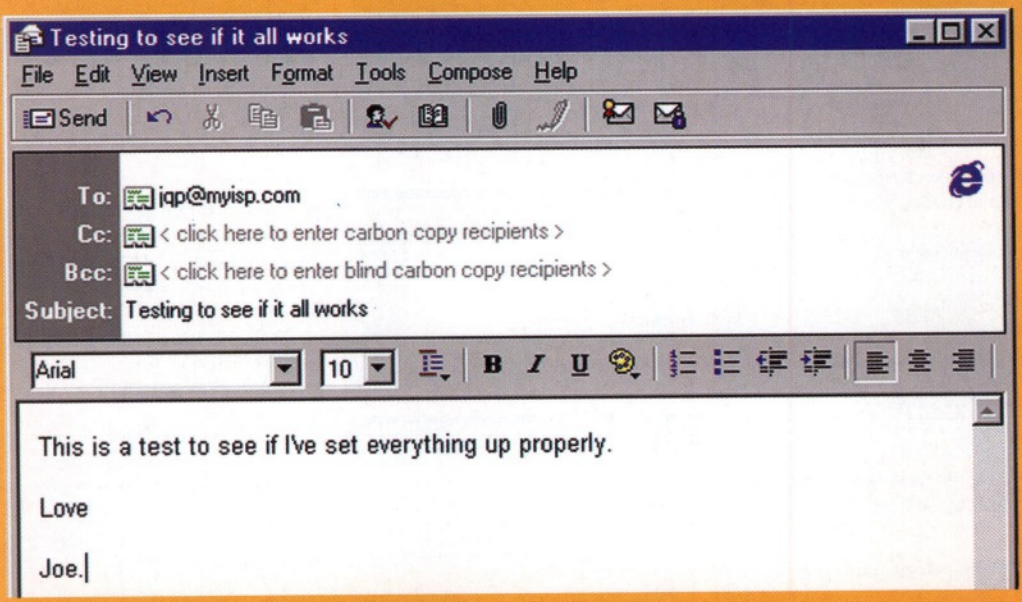
OUTLOOK 98

www.microsoft.com Commercial bigger brother to Outlook Express. Includes an address book, to-do list and calendar, all of which link very elegantly in to the email section of the program.

✔ **Integrates well with address book, diary and scheduler**

✘ **It'll set you back around £100**

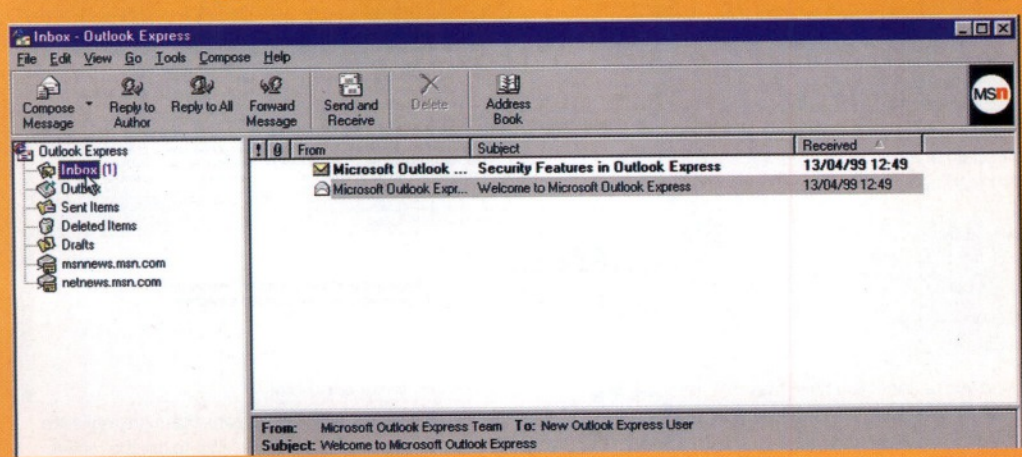
2 Composing your first email message



COMPOSING A MESSAGE

To create a message, click 'Compose Message'. If you click the small arrow just to the right, you will see that there are several pre-defined graphic message templates. But for now, just click on the button itself. Type your own email address in the 'To' field – you'll send an email to yourself to check that everything is working correctly. Enter a subject, for example 'Test Message', and in the body area just type a short message. From the File menu you can click Send to send your message now if you're online. Alternatively, if you're working offline click Send Later. This allows you to create more messages and have them ready for sending when you're ready to log on to the Net.

3 Sending, receiving & reading email



SENDING & RECEIVING MAIL

To send and receive mail, connect to the Net, then click the Send and Receive button. This will check for mail and download any new messages, at the same time sending any outgoing messages you have created. Once the program has stopped receiving mail, you can disconnect from the Net if you wish, to save phone costs. Click on In Box to the left of the screen to access the messages you have received. Click on the message to read its contents.

MORE EMAIL HELP AND ADVICE @ www.thenetmag.co.uk/helpbutton/

- ★ Sending your first message
- ★ Newsgroup etiquette
- ★ Members-only bulletin boards
- ★ Web discussion forums

Newsgroups

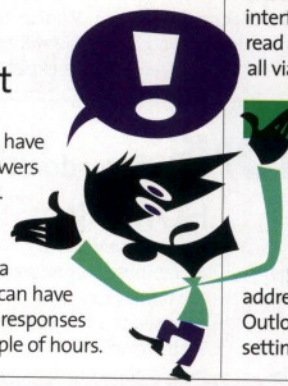
Whatever your specialist subject, there is a free online discussion group on the Net just waiting for your input

What is a newsgroup?

Newsgroups are one of the older services on the Internet. Each group is like a bulletin board – anyone can post messages to different newsgroups, and anyone can read the postings. There are tens of thousands of different newsgroup subjects available, so there will be one that matches your interests – whether you're looking for info on beekeeping or bookkeeping, computers or comics, sewing or sailing.

Why should I use newsgroups?

Although the Web has plenty of information on most subjects, newsgroups have detailed answers to questions. If you have a specific question on a subject, you can have half a dozen responses within a couple of hours.



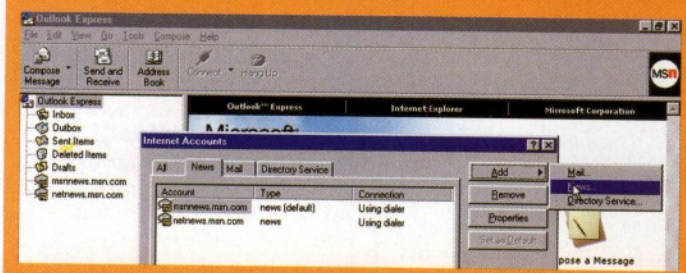
BEGINNER'S TIP

If you don't want to go to the bother of configuring Outlook Express or other newsgroup access software, visit DejaNews **www.deja.com**, a Web-based interface to newsgroups. You can read and send messages from here, all via your Web browser. Simple.

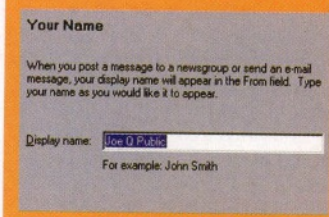
ADVANCED TIP

Your ISP will provide you with its own news server access. Mick's Place at **web.ukonline.co.uk/mick.sz/** has over 50 free-access news server addresses. To add more servers to Outlook Express, go through the setting up steps outlined below.

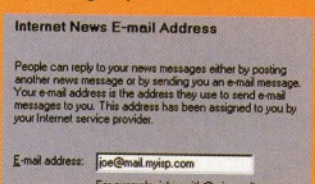
Accessing newsgroups using Outlook Express



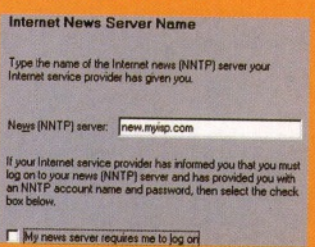
1 Go to the Accounts entry in the Tools menu, click on the News tab to list your current news accounts (if any), hit Add and choose News.



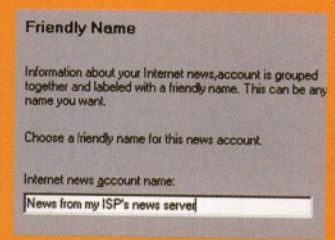
2 Type in your name. This will be displayed in any message you post to a newsgroup. Then hit Next.



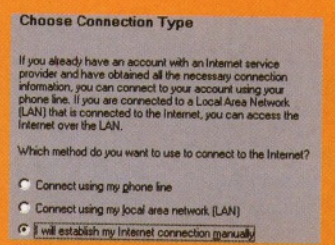
3 Type in your email address. This will be displayed in any message you post. Then click Next.



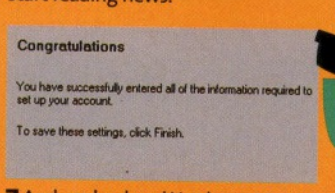
4 Enter the name of your ISP's server which should be given in your user documentation.



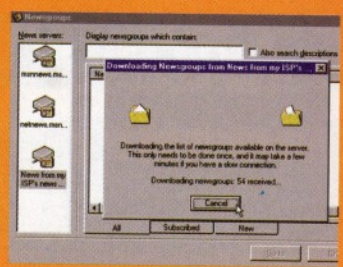
5 Give the news server a name that makes sense to you.



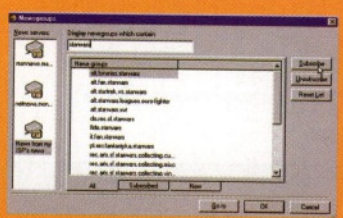
6 Tell Outlook Express that you will dial your ISP manually before you start reading news.



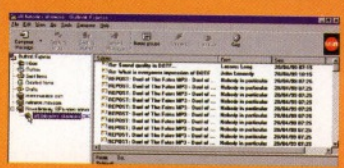
7 And you're done! You have now set up a newsgroup access account. Now let's see how to use it.



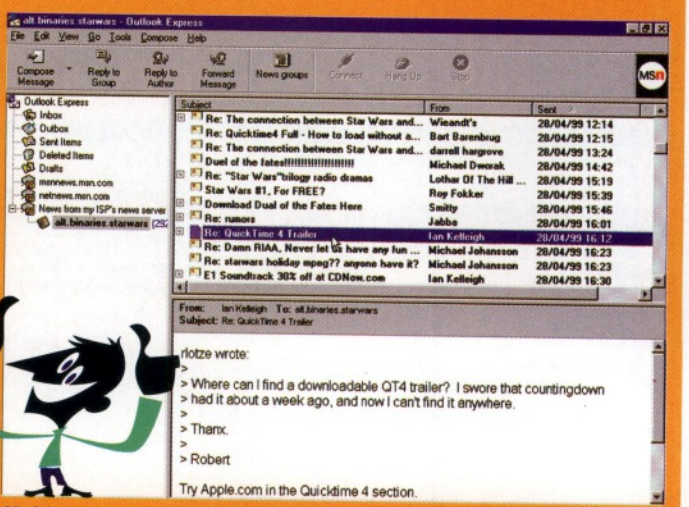
8 After hitting Close, you're asked if you want to download your ISP's list of newsgroups. When you click Yes, the list will be downloaded – so make sure you're online. This can take up to 10 minutes when you first connect to your news server because you are downloading the names of thousands of newsgroups.



9 Once all the newsgroups are downloaded, you can explore. If you want to find *Star Wars* postings, for example, type 'starwars' into the text field at the top of the window to display all newsgroups containing that word. You can subscribe to as many groups as you want.



10 To access a message inside a newsgroup, click on the subject header to read a summary. Double click the subject header and the whole message downloads appearing on the lower half of the screen.



11 If there is a '+' sign by the message header this means there are replies to this message which you can also read. Click on the '+' sign to list the replies.

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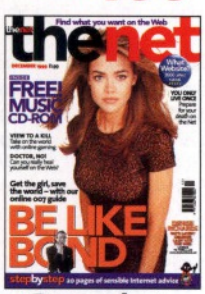

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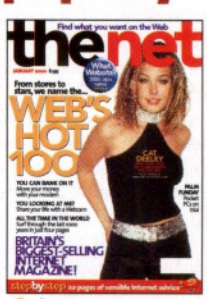

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GROOVE ARMADA

The 'I See You Baby' hitmakers – otherwise known as Tom Findlay and Andy Cato – shake their asses online

WORDS: ROBERT JEFFERY

When did you first discover the Internet, and what do you mainly use it for?
Tom: About 10 years ago. We'll be using it in January to email back sound files from recordings in Brazil.

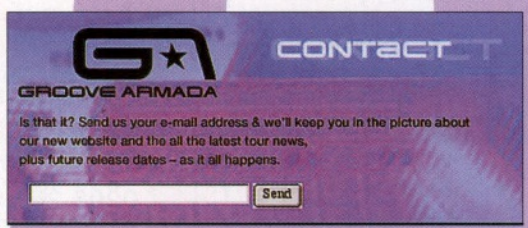
What sort of opportunities do you think the Internet holds for DJs and dance musicians? Are you in favour of MP3, or does it pose a threat to established acts?
Tom: I don't necessarily think that it poses a threat to writers if it's all properly regulated, and people get their dues. Record companies and retailers have cause to be concerned, though they don't need me to tell them that. In a nostalgic sort of a way, I have a special love for record shops of all shapes and sizes. I think there's something magical about them, so I hope they survive and prosper. As for record companies, well, we like ours.

We've discovered an MP3 DJ, who uses a laptop in clubs instead of turntables and vinyl. Is that a positive development, or does it take all the skill out of DJing?
Tom: Technology is constantly re-defining the rules, so who's to say that all the hassle involved with programming and manipulating a laptop is any less skilful than sticking a couple of tunes together? Once again, though, I'm essentially a bit of a Luddite and won't be looking to get shot of my vinyl; I don't even have a CD player..
Andy: Good DJ-ing's a spontaneous performance, while using MP3 would be a bit like a band pre-recording a show before they'd seen the audience.

What's next for Groove Armada? Are you interested in becoming dance superstars like, say, the Chemical Brothers, or are you happy just to let your music do the talking?
Andy: There's absolutely no plans to let the music do the talking. In a desperate bid for celebrity (we've never been allowed in to the Met Bar) we'll be releasing a couple of limited edition Tom and Andy dolls over Christmas, with a chord which parps the trombone riff from *At the River* when tugged. These will retail at £250 for the pair.

Tell us a bit about your backgrounds – why did you give up careers in more traditional musical forms to go into dance music?
Andy: I grew up playing trombone and piano, hammering in leading youth jazz bands and orchestras. Tom practised the trumpet for about 10 minutes a week and spent the rest of his time hanging around in record shops and playing football. I gave up these more traditional forms because jazz musicians don't get handsomely rewarded for playing their favourite records on a Saturday night, and because dance music is brilliant. Tom had no choice.

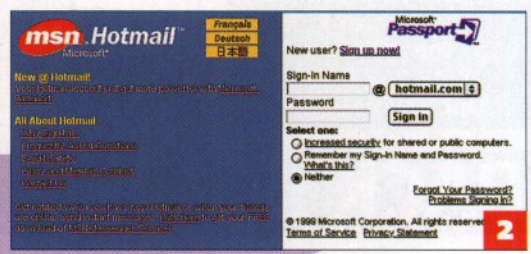
GROOVE ARMADA'S BEST OF THE WEB



1 GROOVE ARMADA

www.groovearmada.com

It's under construction but by all means have a butcher's. Eventually it will give surfers a chance to remix tracks, check live footage, tour dates, and buy tickets. And we mustn't forget the shoddy and hugely over-priced merchandise.



2 HOTMAIL

www.hotmail.com

It's totally essential. The other week I was doing 'a little bit of business' from a beach hut in Thailand, which was lovely and surreal.

3 AMAZON

www.amazon.com

I found some lovely reviews of us here [see right], which is nice. We've found a few offensive reviews, too, which is also nice. And I found a new car online.

Groove Armada's album Northern Star *is released on 28 Jan.*

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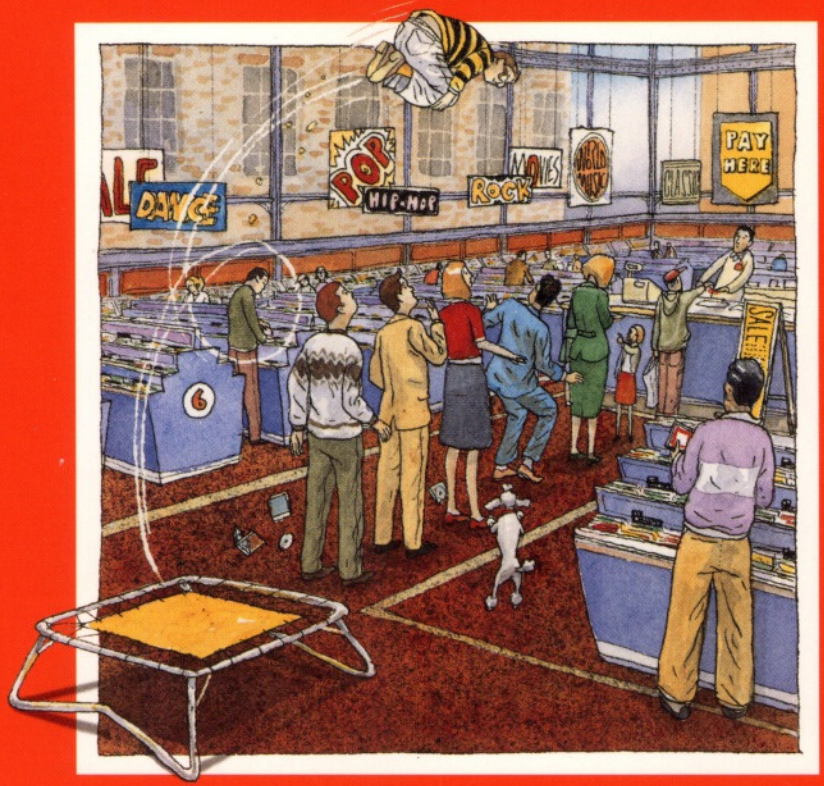

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